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ETHNOGENESIS OF THE METIS, CREE AND CHIPPEWA
IN TWENTIETH CENTURY MONTANA

By

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Thesis

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Abstract

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Ethnogenesis of Metis, Cree and Chippewa in Twentieth Century Montana

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This thesis examines the history of Montana's Metis, Cree and Chippewa people as "landless Indians" in a twentieth century context. Landlessness among the Metis, Cree and Chippewa became a defining aspect of their identity by the twentieth century that distinguished them from both Indian and white people in the state. This paper discusses the historical processes by which the Metis, Cree and Chippewa became landless, and examines the unique aspects of their social and economic lives as landless Indian people. This paper concludes with an examination of the ethnogenesis of Metis, Cree and Chippewa, which was based upon patterns of merger between discrete multi-ethnic groups.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

One aspect of Native American identity is the interplay between the ascribed identity and self-identification of ethnic groups. For the Metis, Cree and Chippewa people of Montana, ascribed identity weighed heavily throughout the course of their social, economic and political history in the state. These groups were collectively referred to in Montana as “Canadian Cree” or as “landless Indians.” Such generalizations have overshadowed their distinctive social, economic, and political history and placed them into a unique social category that distinguished them from the state’s federally recognized Indians and whites. Through a shared historical experience of landlessness, and a collective understanding of that experience, the Metis, Cree and Chippewa people emerged as a unique ethnic group. This paper attempts to provide a broader understanding of the various historical, social and economic processes that contributed to the emergence of Metis, Cree and Chippewa people as “landless Indians” in Montana.

In recent years, several scholarly works have emerged that examine family- or community-based histories of Metis. At a micro-level of inquiry, these works are an important contribution to the often-overlooked study of Metis history. For example, in *The People Who Own Themselves* (2004), Heather Devine examines the genealogical history of the Desjarlais family over a 250-year period throughout Western Canada and northern Montana.¹ Another influential work is that of Martha H. Foster, *We Know Who We Are* (2004). Foster traces the genealogy of the Spring Creek Metis community of present-day Lewistown in central Montana from their origins to their historical migration

and settlement in Montana Territory. Foster's work illustrates how the Spring Creek Metis community maintained a separate and unique identity despite the social and economic marginalization they experienced as a result of the growing non-Indian population in the Lewistown area throughout the late 1800s.²

To date, a handful of unpublished scholarly works contribute to the history of the Metis, Cree and Chippewa people in Montana.³ In addition to these studies, several recently published collaborative works promote a region-wide understanding of Metis, Cree and Chippewa history by examining the similarities and differences of these various groups in both Canada and the United States.⁴ For the purposes of this paper, these works have been synthesized with primary documentation to illustrate how, through a collectively shared understanding, the Metis, Cree and Chippewa people reemerged in twentieth century Montana as a unique ethnic group that stood apart from Indian and white communities in the state.

There are several challenges, however, to researching and reconstructing the history of Metis, Cree and Chippewa people in Montana. These challenges arise from several factors. A lack of source material authored by Metis, Cree and Chippewa people, the high degree of mobility required by these groups for their economic and social survival, and their socio-political position as non-status Indians.

Due to a lack of Metis, Cree and Chippewa authored sources, reconstructing the history of these groups relies upon an historical record created by cultural others. This documentary evidence is primarily a construction of non-Indian viewpoints toward Indian history, and is thus inherently replete with the ethnocentric bias of its authors. For

example, early Montana newspapers are a primary source of information concerning Metis, Cree and Chippewa history in the region. Despite the ethnocentrism and biases reflected in this source, newspapers provide factual information regarding the geographical location and social and economic activities of landless Indians at specific points in Montana history.

As scholars of Metis history have noted, researching and reconstructing Metis history in any region is complicated by the high degree of mobility demanded by Metis livelihoods.⁵ This is also true of the Montana Metis, Cree and Chippewa, whose livelihoods as guides, trappers, hunters, and seasonal wage laborers on farms and ranches dictated their movements across a wide geographical area. This high level of mobility is reflected by the sporadic nature of documentary evidence found within Montana newspapers and other primary records. The result is gaps in the historical record that make it difficult to accurately trace specific individual or group histories throughout the state. While the scarcity of source material is problematic, the most unique challenge to researching Montana Metis, Cree and Chippewa is their legal position as non-status, landless Indians.

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, the relationship between Montana's recognized Indian tribes and the federal government created a paper trail of information, such as census records, ration rolls, and school enrollment records. This documentation provides a fairly consistent record of the social, economic and political life of federally recognized tribes. However, this type of documentation is not available for the Metis, Cree and Chippewa people who lived throughout Montana. Collectively referred to as

“Canadian Cree” or “landless Indians,” they existed without federal recognition until 1916, when a small portion of the state’s total landless Indian population received recognition and enrollment at the Rocky Boy Reservation in north central Montana. Thus, their invisibility as non-status Indians limits research in its ability to discern the multi-ethnic composition of various Metis, Cree and Chippewa bands in Montana, or their inter- and intraethnic relationships to one another. By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, however, the historical record details the presence of Metis, Cree and Chippewa groups in Montana.

The documentation of landless Indians in Montana increased between 1870 and 1900. This is the result of a culmination of several historic events that brought the Metis, Cree, and Chippewa into the Montana consciousness. The defeat of General Custer on the Little Bighorn in June 1876, the flight of Sitting Bull’s Lakota band to Canada in May 1877, the Nez Perce flight between June and October 1877, and the events that lead to the 1869-70 and 1885 resistances in Canada represent a handful of historical events that intensified awareness and heightened fear among white citizens and state officials in Montana concerning the location and movement of Indian people throughout the state. This fear and paranoia fostered an increased awareness of the presence of independent landless groups of Metis, Cree and Chippewa, and their geographical placement across the region was recorded with increasing detail after 1880. The arrival of Metis, Cree, and Chippewa in Montana vis-à-vis late 1800s historical documentation has been generalized by early assayers of Montana history as a flood of Metis and Cree refugees to the United States after the 1885 Resistance in Canada.

For these reasons, ethnohistorical methodology is an essential tool for deconstructing and reconstructing the history of the landless Montana Metis, Cree and Chippewa. The ethnohistorical method is guided by the utilization of a variety of source material to gauge the degree of change a culture undergoes through time, while comprehending the historical variables that contribute to that change.⁶ This paper synthesizes a variety of source material, both anthropological and historical in nature, to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Montana's Metis, Cree and Chippewa people came to be collectively known as "landless Indians."

1.1 Identity Choices

The term *Indian*, and its associated images, "came from the pen of Columbus" and persisted throughout history until contemporary times.⁷ This single term has resulted in a long list of general Indian identities that follows the logic of taxonomic classification systems, where the continent of origin equates to genus and the continent of current residence equates to species. This is represented at the most general level by identifiers such as American Indian, Indian American, or Native American.⁸ The application of the term *Indian* extended to all native people from South America to Alaska, and was marked by generalized characteristics that typically constituted the deficient aspects of Indian people as critiqued against Euro-American standards and moral evaluation (basically those traits that made Indian people Indian and which were not valued by white society).⁹ Good and bad Indian traits were based upon Euro-American perceptions of virtue and vice. The nostalgic view Euro-Americans held of Indian people supported their ideology that civilization of the white culture was virtuous, and that the loss of innocence inherent

in Indian life was nostalgic – civilization and Indianness could never co-exist. As Indian people selectively adopted various aspects of non-Indian culture, the less “Indian” they were perceived to be. The demise of the traditional Indian brought about these nostalgic gazes, and the idea of the Indian as a “vanishing race” was borne.¹⁰

A casual perusing of contemporary literature regarding the topic of Native American identity reveals its manifold nature. For example, Hilary Weaver approaches identity by addressing three primary facets of identity as self-identification, community identification, and external identification.¹¹ Anthropologist Raymond Fogelson discusses four attributes of identity as ideal identity, feared identity, real identity, and claimed identity.¹² Native scholar Tanya Wascase suggests that the subject of Indian identity is “altogether a bogus issue” that has assumed a central role in contemporary times at the expense of more important issues faced by Native people. According to Wascase, the focus on Indian identity serves as a guiding force in political and legal disputes, and overshadows issues of reservation economic underdevelopment and poverty. This focus, according to Wascase, brings about complacency in self-identification, where “being Indian...resides in our genetic makeup” and instills less desire among Indian youth to learn their native languages or follow traditional ideologies because Indianness is reduced to DNA.¹³

In an effort to neither oversimplify nor complicate the identity issue, I adhere to the description of identity provided by Joanne Nagel (1997) who states, “Ethnic identity is at the intersection of ethnic self-definition (internal identification) and ethnic attribution (external ascription).”¹⁴ Basically, identity is neither black nor white, and it

cannot be measured by the composition of our genetic material. Rather, it is a gray area that resides somewhere along a continuum between how we see ourselves and how others perceive us.

1.2 Blood and Identity

The current debate on blood quantum as criteria for defining who is and is not a Native American leads to a plethora of opinion. Some scholars suggest the origins of blood quantum arose as a tool for determining legal jurisdiction over criminal defendants in the Trade and Intercourse Act of 1834. This argument correlates the utilization of blood quantum by early Europeans as a measure of exclusion and inclusion to regulate property inheritance by upper-class heirs, and the adoption of blood quantum in the 1887 General Allotment Act by Euro-Americans as a logical means by which Indian reservations could be divided up among heirs to further the process of civilizing Indian people.¹⁵

Other scholarly critics of blood quantum contend that the racially based policy of blood quantum standards were no more than a future-oriented conspiracy of the Federal government to limit its financial obligation to Indian people over time. This view is supported by historians M. Annette Jaimes and Hilary Weaver, who argue that the United States imposition of blood quantum to determine Indian identity is a duplication of the eugenics code of Nazi Germany to effect “racial purity.”¹⁶ Whether the origins of blood quantum standards served initially as a logical means of property distribution, or was from its inception a conspiratorial government policy aimed at the dissolution of Indian

culture, the use of blood as a genetic quantifier of Indian identity is tightly interwoven into the fabric of contemporary Indian life, both internally and externally.

The utilization of blood quantum as a measure of identity creates multiple avenues for identity. Individual Indian people can identify themselves as “full-blood, mixed-blood, cross-blood, half-breed, traditional, progressive, enrolled, unenrolled, re-Indianized, multi-heritage, bicultural, post-Indian, or by specific tribal affiliation.”¹⁷

While blood quantum creates numerous identities from which Indian people can choose, it also creates a social environment of exclusion where “adopted Indians, multi-cultural Indians, multi-tribal Indians, and Indians existing outside the Federal system” cannot exist.¹⁸

The complex, multiethnic nature of Native American communities in pre- and post-contact eras has emerged as a basic concept in cultural studies within the past few decades. While this realization has led to an increasing interest in the “mixed-blood” or “post-colonial” story in academic writing, it has not done so without its critics. For example, Elizabeth Cook-Lynn, a Crow Creek Sioux professor of English and Native Studies, criticizes the self-described mixed-blood writers of today as representing “hardly an intellectual movement that can claim a continuation of the tribal communal story or an ongoing tribal literary tradition.”¹⁹ Despite the integral nature of the mixed-blood experience in “tribal” Indian life, Cook-Lynn’s statement generalizes the mixed-blood experience, removes it from the tribal community, and invalidates it as a social, cultural, and political facet of Native American history. This statement clearly illustrates a

persistence of rigid conceptual boundaries in contemporary times between Indian and non-Indian; or between ‘tribe’ and ‘other’.

1.3 Ethnogenesis

In 1971, anthropologist William Sturtevant coined the term *ethnogenesis* to define the establishment of group distinctiveness. This label has since evolved as a major concept within social anthropology that embodies the dynamic and dramatic processes of change that ethnic identities undergo as a result of interaction with ethnic others.²⁰ Ethnogenesis can thus be summarized as a series of “broad transformational processes” of a particular group’s ethnic identity through time that results in a distinctive ethnic group identity.²¹ As an ethnic/cultural phenomenon, ethnogenesis is a continual process whereby the identity of discrete cultural groups are negotiated and re-negotiated in response to relationships with cultural others.²²

Since Sturtevant’s 1971 study, academic inquiry into ethnogenesis has examined the variety of ethnic identity and interethnic relationships as constructed by processes of social conflict and fission. A fewer number of studies, however, have focused upon transformative processes where social cooperation and fusion are prevalent.²³ In his essay, “Putting Anthropology Back Together Again,” anthropologist John Moore provides a comparative analogy of ethnogenetic theory and scientific rhizotic models of metallurgy and river morphology and modeling. Through this analogy, Moore illustrates the utility of rhizotic models in social anthropology in illustrating a convergence of diverse components, or roots, that form an amalgamated descendant group. This is in contrast to cladistic models, which utilize hierarchical diagrams, or cladograms, to

illustrate relationships among species. According to Moore, “Metallurgical models provide appropriate analogies for cultural processes because they allow for the creation of new entities that are qualitatively different from their components. The study of river morphology has required models that show how channels of a river separate and recombine in a complex fashion, just as the component populations of the human species separate and recombine.”²⁴

This analogy provides a visual basis for understanding the fluidity of culture change that occurs among ethnic groups through complex inter- and intra-relationships with cultural others through time. The Metis, Cree and Chippewa people of Montana existed in a seamless web of overlapping and interweaving cultural variation, and their survival and persistence depended upon their ability to accommodate and incorporate the social, economic and political changes they experienced through interaction with cultural others. Through this process they emerged in Montana as a new entity that is qualitatively different than that from which they originated.

Chapter 2

Historical Narrative

The history of Plains Metis, Plains Cree and Plains Chippewa people of Montana, known collectively as “landless Indians,” is a compelling but often overlooked aspect of Montana’s Indian and white history. Without land or a legal identity, this unique Indian population has been cast in the shadow of Montana history, both Indian and white, despite their social, cultural and economic contributions to the state’s history as a whole. In fact, contemporary Montana history books do little justice to Montana’s Metis, Cree and Chippewa people, let alone to Montana Indian history in general. For instance, *Montana: A History of Two Centuries* stands as a definitive source of Montana history.²⁵ While this book is a good source of information regarding the history of Montana’s white population, it covers two centuries of Montana’s social, economic and political history at the exclusion of Indian contributions to, and participation in, these central themes. Montana’s Indian people, including the Metis, Cree and Chippewa, are positioned in the book’s first chapter on Montana prehistory alongside a brief overview of the region’s geology, topography, ecology, and paleontology. “Significantly,” the authors conclude, “those Indians first seen by Lewis and Clark and by other white explorers had been in this region for no more than three centuries, and many were late arrivals.”²⁶

While the Metis, Cree and Chippewa have been excluded from Montana’s general history, they acquired a place in Montana’s fictional literature as romantic and tragic ‘half-breed’ figures. This is evident in literary works such as Frank Bird Linderman’s

Lige Mounts, A.B. Guthrie's *The Big Sky*, and *The Death of Jim Loney* by James Welch.²⁷ These images stand in contrast to Montana's nonfiction literary sources, particularly Joseph Kinsey Howard's *Strange Empire*, which presents a serious and realistic image of Metis and Cree history.²⁸

2.1 Plains Cree

One historical and cultural thread of Montana's landless Indian people is the Plains Cree. The most consulted source of early Plains Cree history is the work of anthropologist David G. Mandelbaum, which illustrates the modification of Cree culture from a primarily eastern-based Woodland group through the dispersal of some Cree bands onto the Canadian Plains that emerged as a distinguishable "true Plains group."²⁹

According to Mandelbaum, the ancestral Plains Cree occupied a vast region between Lake Superior and Hudson Bay, and were referred to as the eastern Woodland Cree. Woodland Cree bands established trade relations with their eastern Huron neighbors long before contact with Jesuit missionaries in the mid-seventeenth century. Skilled in hunting and trapping, Woodland Cree traditionally made seasonal movements between interior woodlands to hunt, and traveled the streams and shores of Lake Superior to fish, trap, and gather wild foods. This ecologically diverse region spanned interior woodland areas and numerous stream and lake ecosystems, all of which the Cree utilized seasonally for fish, furs, and large game, such as elk, deer, and moose.³⁰

The Plains Cree cultural designation differentiates prairie-based Cree people from their eastern Woodland Cree relatives through historical processes of migration, linguistic separation, and the adoption of differing patterns of subsistence and economy in a

Canadian plains environment.³¹ The motivating factor behind the historical migrations of Cree onto the Plains throughout the eighteenth century is summarized as an economic response to the expanding fur trade in the east.

According to Mandelbaum, the westward expansion of the fur trade within Cree territory brought about the increase of a non-native population, the depletion of wild game, restrictions on the seasonal mobility of Cree hunting bands, and limited access to traditional areas of resource procurement. In response to these social and economic pressures, Cree bands increasingly migrated westward to tap fresh resources of furs and maintain their central economic position as middlemen in fur trade activities.³²

The Cree involvement at the onset of the fur trade era enabled them to gain a strong middlemen position in trade relationships between natural resources, French and American traders and trade posts, and Plains Indian groups to the west and south, such as the Assiniboine, Mandan-Hidatsa, and Blackfoot. Furthermore, the Cree acquisition of the gun enabled them to successfully expand their territory through the displacement of tribes to the west and south. The advantages of a large population and status as trade middlemen enabled the Cree to successfully stabilize their presence on the Canadian Plains by the nineteenth century.³³

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Plains Cree bands fully adapted to a Plains buffalo hunting economy, and became geographically, linguistically, economically, and socially distinguishable from the eastern Woodland Cree. By early nineteenth century, highly diversified groups of Plains Cree were well established

throughout the Canadian provinces of Manitoba, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, and the region of land lying north of the Missouri River in present-day Montana.³⁴

2.2 Plains Chippewa

Like the Plains Cree, the Plains Chippewa have eastern roots. Known commonly in Canada as Plains Ojibwa (Ojibway) or Saulteaux, the ancestral Plains Chippewa historically occupied lands south of Lake Superior in present day Michigan and Wisconsin. Throughout the nineteenth century, Plains Chippewa extended their territory across northern portions of present-day North Dakota and Montana and the central and southern portions of Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, Canada.³⁵

Prior to their establishment on the Plains, Chippewa economy and survival depended primarily on fishing, trapping, and harvesting berries, roots, and rice in the Great Lakes region, supplemented by the hunting of large and small game. Similar to the Plains Cree, the development of the fur trade compelled Plains Chippewa to increase their hunting and trapping activities in order to obtain steel knives, copper kettles, and other valued European items, such as the flintlock, during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The increase in hunting and trapping activities among the Plains Chippewa resulted in the formation of mutually beneficial relationships among differing bands of Plains Chippewa, Plains Cree and Assiniboiné.

These mutually beneficial relationships aided the emerging plains lifestyle of Chippewa bands, eventually separating them from their woodland relatives (hence their “Plains” distinction). The formation of political coalitions and intermarriage between some Plains Cree and Assiniboiné groups afforded bands of Plains Chippewa to

capitalize on their Plains Cree relationships and obtain desired European trade goods. The formation of complex social networks between Plains Cree, Assiniboiné and Plains Chippewa provided protection in numbers against common enemies, such as the Sioux and Blackfeet, while promoting the ability of these groups to successfully expand their hunting and trapping territories.³⁶ The security afforded by a Plains economy dominated by buffalo hunting and trade increased the number of Ojibwa bands moving on to the Plains.

2.3 Plains Metis

While Woodland Cree and Great Lakes Chippewa remade themselves through direct involvement in the expanding fur trade, Metis origins are directly associated with the seventeenth and eighteenth century fur trade. The Metis arose as a result of the union between French trappers and Indian women. The French adjective, *metis*, literally means ‘mixed,’ or ‘half-breed, half-caste,’ and was applied historically to the descendants of unions between French or French-Canadian trappers and Cree or Ojibwa women. Initially, the term *metis* applied to people of predominately French (French-Canadian) and Cree or Ojibwa descent in the Red River region, but throughout the nineteenth century the definition of *metis* expanded gradually to include anyone of mixed European and Indian ancestry. The use of the term *metis* in the United States, however, was virtually nonexistent until the 1960s.³⁷

As a twentieth century ethnic designation, Metis people are composed of several groups with diverse ethnic backgrounds. In the United States, the historical definition of Metis gradually expanded to apply to any person of European (ie: French, Scottish, and

English) and Indian (primarily Cree and Ojibwa) descent.³⁸ In the Red River region of Manitoba, many Metis of French-Indian background who interacted with native-born Hudson Bay Company families were usually referred to as “halfbreeds.”³⁹ Because the term *metis* did not exist in the English lexicon, people of Metis ancestry were described as halfbreeds, breeds, mixed-bloods, or non-status Indian.⁴⁰

Contemporary scholars redefine the Metis as a “people in motion” who never occupied a specifically bounded tribal region, but continuously evolved as distinct communities that utilized a variety of resource areas.⁴¹ Because Metis cultural and historical life is fluid in nature, research must be conducted from a community specific approach with attention to geographical location, economic resources, and direction of historical movements and migrations.⁴²

2.4 Change and Continuity

The Cree, Chippewa, and Metis groups that became geographically, socially, and economically distinct from their eastern and northern counterparts continued to adapt and accommodate to change. For example, band level societies among the Plains Cree, Plains Chippewa, and Plains Metis responded to the economic and social pressures brought about by the fur trade, such as increasing foreign populations and resource competition, and a desire to maintain a middleman position in the fur trade. Complex inter-ethnic relationships formed as various Plains bands united for mutual support in hunting and trade, allowing each group the opportunity to acquire and/or maintain access to and control over land and its resources. The depletion of valuable trade furs in eastern

woodland habitats, such as beaver, brought about a shift in economic interests toward a Plains buffalo hunting economy. Buffalo, which was an essential staple of Plains life in its ability to provide food, shelter, and clothing, continued to support viable and stable populations in the late 1700s and early 1800s. As the fur trade spread westward, and bison hunting became increasingly commodified, the nature of social and political alliances between differing tribal groups changed. In some cases, the relationships that formed resulted in the emergence of new ethnic group identities, or ethnogenesis, as these groups reinvented themselves in a new political, social, ecological, and economic setting.

The dynamism of inter- and intra-relationships that emerged on the Plains is aptly illustrated in the seminal work of Susan R. Sharrock, *Crees, Cree-Assiniboines, and Assiniboines: Interethnic Social Organization on the Far Northern Plains*. Sharrock demonstrates the complexity of social relationships that emerged between two distinct ethnic groups, the Plains Cree and Assiniboiné. In examining the historical relationship between the Plains Cree and Assiniboiné, Sharrock illustrates that the degree to which Plains Cree and Assiniboiné bands interacted varied widely – as political allies in warfare, for mutual support in territorial expansion, and as partners in hunting and trade ventures. The foundation of Sharrock's work utilizes three forms of interrelationship to describe the various degrees of interaction between the Plains Cree and Assiniboiné: Alliance, Intermarriage and Polyethnic Coresidence, and Fused Ethnicity.⁴³

According to Sharrock, the alliance stage of Plains Cree and Assiniboiné interrelationship involved mutual support and cooperation in subsistence and military activities, but each ethnic group maintained separate political, social, and economic

independence from each other. In the second form, intermarriage and polyethnic coresidence, the intensification of intermarriage and coresidence among certain groups of Plains Cree and Assiniboiné resulted in polyethnic families and polyethnic coresidency. In some instances, an intensification of these polyethnic situations resulted in a fused ethnicity between these two socially and politically discrete ethnic groups.

Sharrock illustrates how a fused ethnicity, or group hybridization, among the Plains Cree and Assiniboiné is demonstrated by the documented existence of a polyethnic coresident group, known as the Young Dogs, or half Cree half Assiniboiné. This unique ethnic group was recorded in the 1810 journal of Alexander Henry the Younger as the Cree-Assiniboiné, and in the Fort Pelly journals of 1837 as the Young Dogs, or half Cree half Assiniboiné. The emergence of a Cree-Assiniboiné ethnicity that was observed by cultural outsiders illustrates that a “hybrid” interrelationship formed between distinct bands of Cree and Assiniboiné, where linguistic elements (Algonkian and Dakota-Siouan, respectively) and cultural traits from each group coalesced to form a new ethnic group identity that became distinguishable from other polyethnic groups of Plains Cree and Assiniboiné.⁴⁴

Contemporary research concerning Montana’s landless Métis, Cree and Chippewa people identifies two geographical residential patterns based upon two separate historical migrations. These residential patterns were constructed by anthropologists Robert Franklin and Pamela Bunte, who were hired as researchers by the Little Shell Métis-Chippewa in 1994 to write the “Supplemental Evidence and Analysis in Support of Federal Acknowledgement of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana.”⁴⁵

Based upon Federal census information between 1880 and 1920, Franklin and Bunte concluded that Montana's Metis, Chippewa and Cree population occupied two specific geographical regions. The first geographical residential pattern defined by Franklin and Bunte is referred to as the Havre-Wolf Point-Lewistown triangle. This area encompasses a portion of the Montana Hi-Line, including the Lewistown area in the south, and was settled as early as 1870. The second residential pattern is defined as the Front Range, which extends north and south along the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains. According to Franklin and Bunte, settlement along the Front Range occurred primarily after 1885.

In *We Know Who We Are: Metis Identity in a Montana Community*, historian Martha Foster drew upon Franklin and Bunte's Havre-Wolf Point-Lewistown construct, extended the eastern arm of the triangle from Wolf Point to Glasgow, and used it as the basis for her micro-level examination of the Spring Creek Metis community of Lewistown. According to Foster, the Spring Creek Metis community formed the nucleus of a principal cluster of Metis families living within an area "that has come to be known as the Lewistown/Havre/Glasgow triangle or the Lewistown/Milk River triangle."⁴⁶

Following Franklin and Bunte's construct, Foster also identifies the second geographical residential pattern as the Front Range. This region includes the north-south section of land along the Rocky Mountain Front from the Montana-Canada border south to Augusta, Montana. Again, Franklin and Bunte utilize the same census data to illustrate that the settlement of Metis, Cree and Chippewa along the Front Range occurred primarily after the military resistance of 1885 in Canada. According to Foster, one

exception to the 1885 settlement of the Front Range was the Metis families who moved from the Spring Creek Metis settlement of present-day Lewistown, Montana, to the site of St. Peter's Mission, located west of Cascade, Montana, in 1880-81.

As defined, the Front Range and Lewistown-Milk River Triangle residential patterns confine the history of Montana's Metis, Cree and Chippewa settlement in a context of "first" and "later" settlement. Subscription to these kinds of rigid boundaries reduces the dynamic and complex essence of the Metis, Cree, and Chippewa experience in Montana. Therefore, the populations represented within these geographical areas should not be considered exclusive of each other as ethnic enclaves, nor should they be weighed against one another as the "first" and "second" principal cluster.

The genesis of Plains Metis, Plains Cree, and Plains Chippewa people in Montana cannot be bound to one geographical area based upon a timeline of residence delineated by the first and later settlements. Neither should the history of a multi-ethnic people be confined to a single historical event, such as the 1885 Metis Resistance in Canada.

The available ethnohistorical evidence does allow us to surmise some general aspects of Metis, Cree and Chippewa history in Montana. For example, the northern tier of Montana, from the Missouri River to the Canadian border, comprises the traditional southern range of Plains Metis, Plains Cree and Plains Chippewa groups who seasonally exploited the region's bison and other game throughout the late seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries. The decline of buffalo herds on the Plains throughout the late 1870s brought as much tension between groups for control over resources as it did cooperation and tolerance among groups in hunting remaining herds. The economic

necessity of hunting buffalo combined with the ecological reality of shrinking buffalo herds brought discrete hunting groups of Blackfoot, Cree and Metis together at Joe Kipp's post along the Missouri River at Carroll in fall 1880.⁴⁷

At this time, the majority of remaining bison herds ranged primarily between the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers. James W. Schultz, who ran Joe Kipp's trading post, later recalled the arrival of "Louis Riel and about one hundred families of his Red River, French-Cree mixed bloods, and a thousand or so Cree, led by their chief, Big Bear" at the Carroll post in late fall 1880. The arrival of these groups brought tension to the Blackfoot camps of Chief Crow Big Feet (Crow Foot) and Blood camps under Running Rabbit and Far-Off-in-Sight who arrived at the post one month earlier to camp, hunt, and conduct trade throughout the winter.⁴⁸ Fearing that tensions among the Indian bands would escalate into fighting, thus ruining their chances for a prosperous trade season, Joe Kipp requested a counsel among the various band chiefs in order to persuade them to maintain peace while they camped and hunted. Crow Big Feet and Running Rabbit agreed to influence their young warriors against hostility. Big Bear responded, "We knew that you all were here, but we had to come or starve, for there was no place else for us to go. I am all for peace. You are many; we are few. I ask you to have pity for us."⁴⁹

Out of economic necessity, these discrete ethnic groups maintained peaceful relations throughout the winter of 1880/81. The Blackfoot, Bloods, Cree, and Metis remained near the post throughout the winter, until the following spring when the various groups moved out onto the plains to hunt. By fall 1881, the Blackfoot and most of the Bloods left the Carroll area for their Canadian reserves to receive annuity payments. The

Cree and Metis bands and 30 Blood lodges remained in the area and continued to hunt and trade their dried meat, pemmican, and hides of buffalo, elk, deer, and antelope for ammunition, guns, blankets, and whisky.⁵⁰

2.5 Invisible Histories

Historians of Canadian Metis history often address the absence of Metis history in the larger scheme of Canadian history, pointing out that Canadian Metis history has been confined between a seventeenth and eighteenth century origin in the Red River Valley of Canada and a historical climax during the Metis military resistances of 1869-70 and 1885. In a post-1885 context, the social, political, and cultural history of Metis in Canada becomes virtually absent.⁵¹ In contrast to the invisibility of Canadian Metis after these events, the military resistances of 1869-70 and 1885 in Canada mark the emergence of Metis in the Montana historical consciousness.

Metis and Cree who moved south of the International Boundary after the 1869-70 and 1885 Metis resistances did so in search of freedom from Canadian oppressors, but also out of a desire to remain active in trade and pursue remaining buffalo herds. Despite the realities, the presence of Metis in Montana after the 1885 resistance in Canada was perceived historically by Montana's non-Indian people as illegally immigrating Cree who were fleeing persecution of crimes committed against white settlers in Canada. As a result, this major military event in Canadian Metis history has confused and obscured the history of the American Metis experience.⁵²

This volatile period in Canadian Metis history contributed to a general misconception in the United States that all landless Indians residing south of the

International Boundary were “Canadian Cree refugees” of those events.⁵³ Therefore, all of the Metis, Cree and Chippewa who chose to live south of the international boundary after 1885 were automatically assumed to be “Canadian Cree” by both Indian and non-Indian people. The ability for a distinct Metis identity to flourish south of the international boundary was further hindered through the ascription of pejorative references such as mixedblood, halfbreed, or breeds. The confusion surrounding American Metis history in the United States persists, in part, because the term *Metis*, used widely throughout Canada to describe people of Indian and French ancestry, never gained linguistic acceptance in the United States.⁵⁴ More importantly perhaps, as historian Jacqueline Peterson argues, a dominant myopic view of racially mixed people in America has rendered Metis social and cultural life meaningless and insignificant to Indian-White history in the United States.⁵⁵

Contemporary research challenges the misconception of American Metis as “foreigners” by illuminating the diversity of the Metis experience south of the international boundary line in North Dakota, Minnesota, and Montana. For example, the work of historian Verne Dusenberry contributes substantial evidence to the fact that most Montana Metis are American born Chippewa from the Pembina region of Minnesota. According to Dusenberry, most Pembina Chippewa descendency extends from the Metis hunters and trappers of the Red River region in Canada, and throughout the United States territories of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Montana.⁵⁶

As contemporary research continues to expand our knowledge of the Metis, Cree and Chippewa experience both north and south of the international boundary, in doing so

it emphasizes a need to abandon uniform approaches to the diffusion of people, knowledge and admixture. For example, in 1978 historian Jacqueline Peterson identified Pembina as the earliest fur trade center on the Red River settled by Metis from eastern-based settlements in the Ontario and the Great Lakes regions.⁵⁷ The unpublished research of historian Ruth Swan expands upon Peterson's work, illustrating that many Metis settlers in Pembina not only came from eastern-based trade centers in the Great Lakes and Ontario regions, but from the Saskatchewan River in North West Canada.⁵⁸ This succession of inquiry and research blurs the cultural boundaries set by earlier scholarship, and contributes to an increasing understanding of the complexity and fluidity of intra-relationships among Plains Metis, Plains Cree, and Plains Chippewa groups.

Metis who openly identify with their unique Metis socio-cultural heritage often de-emphasize the importance of the international line between Canada and the United States by expressing their dualistic heritage as a 'people of the region' laying across the northern portions of present day Montana, North Dakota, Minnesota, and the southern Canadian provenances of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.⁵⁹

The Cree referred to the Metis as *o-tee-paym-soo-wuk*, meaning "their own boss,"⁶⁰ and is a term that personifies the social, linguistic, and economic diversity of Metis culture. The construction of Metis social life involves bilateral kinship networks, whereby both spouses maintain close relationships with each family. The Michif language, unique to the Metis culture, includes a mixture of Scotch, Gaelic Irish brogue, French, and Cree. From an economic viewpoint, the Metis employed themselves as post factors, clerks, interpreters, guides, canoemen, packers, and traders. Some Metis families

lived semi-settled lives on small farms and ranches, while others maintained a high degree of mobility as hunters and trappers. Depending upon available resources, Metis livelihoods remained flexible and opportunistic, and their bilingual ability proved beneficial in different economic and social settings.⁶¹

2.6 Mixed Marriage in Montana

The marriages that occurred between white men and Indian women received a mixed response. Referred to as “squaw men,” white males who took Indian wives were thought of by some as “crafty, steel-hard men, tempered by peril, the fight for survival, conceived in the womb of a spreading new society.”⁶² In fact, many of Montana’s most noted pioneer families evolved from these mixed marriages. Sol “Sorrel Horse” Abbott and Henry Powell both married Blackfeet women, and their families were among some of the earliest recorded settlers at Willow Rounds along the Marias River, near the present-day town of Shelby, Montana.⁶³

Other early “squaw men” of Montana are notably “Major” John Owen, who came to the Bitterroot Valley with his Shoshone wife Nancy in 1850 to conduct trade with the local Bitterroot Salish, a number of “Indian half-breeds,” and a small handful of white settlers.⁶⁴ John Owen’s personal journals and Fort Owen trade post ledgers illustrate the numerous “halfbreeds” who lived throughout western Montana and worked in a variety of occupations.

The biographical research of traders listed in the Fort Owen ledger, compiled by George Weisel in 1955, provides valuable information on the numerous “French and Scotch half-breed men” who conducted business at Fort Owen between 1850 and 1860.

Among those were men such as Benjamin Keiser, a “halfbreed living among the Flathead” (Bitterroot Salish), who worked for John Owen at the fort in 1851, served as a guide for Lieutenant Mullan in 1854, and was employed by Isaac I. Stevens as an interpreter during the treaty councils of 1855 at Council Grove (Hellgate Treaty) and the 1855 Lame Bull treaty on the Judith River in central Montana. Other men listed in the Fort Owen ledger include the “halfbreed Iroquois” Pierre Baptiste, Francois Lamoose, Delaware Jim, Gabriel Prudhomme, and Michael Ogden, the halfbreed son of Hudson Bay Company trader Peter Skene Ogden. George Monteur (Monture), a Hudson Bay Company interpreter, was considered “one of the most trustworthy and highly regarded half-breeds in the Rocky Mountains,” and served as John Owen’s guide and interpreter on his trips from the Bitterroot Valley to Fort Walla Walla (in present day Washington), and back again.⁶⁵ These individuals provided their astute knowledge of the land, its diverse people and their languages to early white explorers and traders in Montana. Despite these valuable skills, not all of the Metis received favorable consideration.

In 1880, early Montana trader and author James W. Schultz expressed his dislike of the Cree and Metis traders who frequented the Carroll trade post, located east of Fort Benton near the junction of the Missouri and Musselshell Rivers. While Shultz financially benefited from Metis and Cree trade, he condemned the Metis for their “awkward physical appearance and peculiar habits and customs,” and considered them “the worst set of liars and thieves that ever traveled across the plains.”⁶⁶ Shultz’s ethnocentric bias toward Cree and Metis must be considered in the context of his social position as an adopted member of the Blackfeet, and as the husband of Nat-ah’-ki, a

Blackfeet woman. His distaste of the “halfbreed” is apparently selective, considering Shultz’s close relationship with Berry and Joe Kipp, both of whom were half Mandan and half white, but not Metis.⁶⁷

2.7 Summary

The increased settlement of foreigners in traditional woodland areas depleted sources of valuable furs, especially beaver, which suffered the destruction of habitat, over-trapping, and disease. Westward settlement also decreased access to traditional resource areas by Plains Chippewa, Plains Cree, and Metis hunters, trappers, and gatherers. In response to a loss of resources and access to them, westward migrations and adaptations occurred. The buffalo became a dominant aspect of Plains life, providing food, shelter, and clothing, in addition to supplying important trade commodities such as hides and pemmican.

The security afforded in hunting buffalo brought more Cree, Chippewa, and Metis to the Plains, where mutual economic, social, and political interests came together, and unique and complex relationships formed across ethnic lines. Through this process, distinct social, political, and economic identities emerged and continually changed throughout the late eighteenth century and into the first half of the nineteenth century. By the twentieth century, bands of Plains Cree, Plains Chippewa, and Metis were common on the Montana landscape. As the Plains bison herds diminished to near extinction by the late 1800s, hunters and trappers responded by shifting their economic focus in securing wage labor positions on the farms and cattle ranches becoming prevalent throughout the state.

Survival in Montana depended upon a complex system of kin networks between diverse groups of Metis, Cree and Chippewa. The historical processes of increasing white settlement, the formation of an international boundary line dividing the United States and Canada, the creation of Indian reservations, and the demise of bison herds required a reorganization of the social, economic, and political activities of those who came to be known as Montana's Landless Indians.

Chapter 3

The Landless Indian

The “landless Indian” is a unique category of Indian people, defined in general terms by characteristics of landlessness and a non-enrolled Indian status. Numerous attempts have been made at defining the ‘who and what’ of Indian society. For example, Frell M. Owl, a government agent and member of the Eastern Cherokee tribe, defined the non-status Indian as “an Indian whose name is not officially recorded on a tribal roll...often a descendant of a tribal member...and is in most cases a mixed-blood Indian.”⁶⁸ According to Owl, an Indian’s non-enrolled status results from either a lack of the degree of Indian blood required for enrollment or their birth or residence off the reservation, both of which deems them ineligible for enrollment and denies them rights to tribal land, and health and welfare services.

Owl concludes that the presence of non-enrolled Indians “complicates the sensitive national Indian problem in many facets” because they often reside on reservation land, have blood ties with various tribal Indians, are recognized as tribal members by some, or as Indians by others. Because they are recognized as Indian, despite their legal status, state officials deny them social and economic services and Federal officials are “impelled to assist needy non-enrolled Indians.”⁶⁹ The complication Owl refers to is not the existence of non-enrolled Indians, but government Indian policies that created a status system of enrolled and non-enrolled Indian people.

3.1 National Perception of Landless Indians

The social and economic conditions of non-status Indians received national attention in 1928, when the Meriam Commission compiled its report on *The Problem of Indian Administration*, which dedicated a chapter to the nations “Migrated Indians.”⁷⁰

The Commission defined the “migrated or camp” Indian communities as socially distinct Indian enclaves on the outskirts of industrialized centers throughout the United States.

The Commission upheld these unique Indian communities as physical proof of the success of the Indian reservation as a temporary civilizing tool. The Indians living within these communities represented “the more industrious Indian” who had chosen to follow the path to civilization by leaving the Indian reservation and establishing themselves in the rural and urban non-Indian community.

While the Commission acknowledged the prevalence of inadequate medical services, educational opportunities, and low wages among migrated Indian communities, the commission cited the general lack of “health, sanitation, and mode of life” among camp Indians as the primary reasons non-Indians did not socially accept and economically advance this unique group of Indian people.⁷¹ The financial and social success of migrated Indian communities was also hindered by the presence of mixed-blood Indians who lived in these communities.

The mixed-blood portion of migrated Indian communities, according to the Commission, “remain a problem to the national government only because their claims and rights remain unsettled.”⁷² The Commission recommended the government vigorously set forth policies that would settle mixed-blood grievances to allow mixed-

blood Indians to socially and economically absorb into the white population and “largely forget their Indian blood.”⁷³

The term “Surplus Indian” arose as official language describing off-reservation Indians in the 1950s, when Indian reservation land bases were deemed inadequate for a growing Indian population. The surplus Indian faction was a reality of reservation overpopulation, which became an issue of major concern within Indian Affairs after World War II.⁷⁴

3.2 The Landless Indian in Montana

Landlessness among Indian people in Montana occurred through a variety of historical processes directly related to the Indian reservation system and the government policies that administered them. In some instances landlessness was the result of Indian responses to a foreign system of governance, where the realities of reservation life prompted Indian people to control their destiny outside of the reservation system. In other cases, landlessness occurred as a result of reservation lands that were environmentally unsuited for agricultural purposes, yet government policies demanded that Indian people develop their land through agrarian efforts.

Landless Indians homesteaded in Montana under provisions set forth by the Homestead Act of 1862 and the General Allotment Act of 1887. The 1862 Homestead Act required homesteaders to live on their selected 160 acres for five years, during which time general improvements were to be made such as the construction of housing, barns, and fences. At the end of this five-year “prove-up” period, title to the land would be issued. The 1887 General Allotment Act contained similar provisions, and extended to

Indian people not living on an Indian reservation or for whom no reservation had been established. After a five-year prove-up period on land of the Indians choosing, the Indian allottee was issued a trust patent for the land. The patent was held in trust by the United States government for a twenty-five year period. At the end of the twenty-five year trust period, Indians were conferred citizens and received a fee simple patent and full title to their land.⁷⁵

The inclusion of Indians in the 1862 and 1887 acts was a means by which the government could facilitate the process of civilizing Indians by effectively breaking up tribal organizations and communities. Indian Affairs policymakers hoped the allotment of land on Indian reservations would instill in the Indian mind a sense of individualized and privatized land ownership supported through agricultural endeavors.⁷⁶ For government appointed Indian Agents, Indians who secured allotments on the public domain signified the more industrious Indian who choose to take a positive step forward in becoming civilized. In contrast, Indian people were personally motivated to apply for public domain allotments in order to acquire property and exist outside of the confinement, isolation, and economic impoverishment of Indian reservations.

The histories of the Turtle Mountain Reservation in northeastern North Dakota and the Rocky Boy Reservation in central Montana illustrate a portion of the historical process of landlessness among Metis, Cree and Chippewa communities in Montana. Gregory Camp's 1987 Ph.D. Dissertation, "The Turtle Mountain Plains-Chippewas and Metis, 1797-1935," describes the social and political dynamics governing the history of Metis and Chippewa from the Pembina and Turtle Mountain areas of North Dakota.⁷⁷ As

Camp illustrates, the lack of land at the Turtle Mountain Reservation forced many of the Turtle Mountain Indians to take allotments of land on the public domain in North Dakota and Montana. This was achieved through policies such as the 1862 Homestead Act and the 1887 General Allotment Act.

In her study of the Spring Creek Metis of Lewistown, Martha Foster identifies a common misconception of Montana Metis history in that the Metis never applied for or received title to land because they were excluded from participation in the provisions of the 1862 Homestead Act. As Foster illustrates, the Spring Creek Metis did participate in the 1862 Homestead Act. In fact, many of the Spring Creek Metis were descendants of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa who applied for Turtle Mountain allotments in eastern Montana in the late 1800s and early 1900s, but were ruled ineligible because they could not be identified as Turtle Mountain enrollees. Some of the Spring Creek Metis later filed and successfully received deeds for their land under the 1862 Homestead Act.⁷⁸ Foster supports the homesteading success of Metis families by citing the numerous Front Range Metis families, specifically the Bushies (or Boucher) and Salois families, who successfully applied for and received title to land.⁷⁹ Additional research suggests that the actual success of Spring Creek Metis families in obtaining title to homesteaded land in the Lewistown area was limited. The experience of Front Range Metis families was no exception.

Many Metis families along the Front Range did apply for homesteads on the public domain in the early 1900s, but the rapid increase of white settlement in Montana

during the first two decades of the twentieth century prevented many Métis families from successfully securing title to homesteaded land. For example, Fred Nault describes the attempts of his grandfather, William Boushie, to homestead in the Dupuyer area near the southern boundary of the Blackfeet Reservation. According to Nault, his grandfather attempted to homestead near Dupuyer two separate times between 1910 and 1916, but never established a permanent home “being he was Indian.”⁸⁰ Because William Boushie could not secure title to land in the Dupuyer area, he later applied for enrollment at the Rocky Boy Reservation for he and his grandson when it was created by executive order in 1916.

As Gregory Camp illustrates in his dissertation on the Metis and Plains-Chippewa of the Turtle Mountain Reservation, numerous Metis families were forced to move from the St. Joseph and Pembina areas to Montana between 1876 and 1880. In the 1900s, more Metis and Chippewa families from the Turtle Mountain Reservation took public domain allotments under the terms of the McCumber agreement, but were unable to secure actual title to land because they were Indian. For example, Joseph Doney, a “half blood Chippewa” born in Montana in 1879, filed on a homestead under the 1862 General Homestead Act in Malta, Montana, but was rejected on the basis that he was “of Indian blood and not entitled to a citizenship homestead.” Doney subsequently filed for land under the 1887 General Allotment Act and received a 160-acre homestead in 1910. Four years later, the government rejected Doney’s allotment because he was not affiliated with any tribe of Indians.⁸¹

John Belgard (Belgarde), a mixed-blood Chippewa from the Turtle Mountain, moved to Wolf Point, Montana, in 1910 where he took an allotment under the 1887 General Allotment Act under the direction of Turtle Mountain allotting agent. Four years later, the commissioner of the General Land Office rejected Belgard's application and canceled his rights to the allotment on the basis that he was "not a recognized member of the Turtle Mountain Indians."⁸²

Thus, Indian families who participated in taking public domain allotments were not signifying a personal desire to relinquish their individual social and cultural identities as the government intended. Though public domain allotments were available to Indians who did not have land on a reservation, individual Indians were prevented from receiving title to selected land. Indians who received homesteads under the 1862 Homestead Act were required, as were non-Indian homesteaders, to pay a filing fees when taking application for a homestead. Sometimes Indian homesteaders were unable to pay the fee. In cases where Indian people paid the filing fee, the scrutiny of discriminating non-Indian settlers dictated the Indians success in receiving title to the land.

Both the homestead and allotment acts required the land to be utilized according to a Euro-American, yeoman-farmer ideal. This ideal held that the average farming family would settle on the homestead and "prove up" on their land selection by constructing a house and barn, fencing the property, and devoting a significant area of the land base to stock-raising or agricultural development. The reliance upon an agriculturally based model of economy in the northern plains was not a viable way of life for the Metis, Cree and Chippewa. The agrarian concept of working the land differed

greatly from landless Indian people, whose economic contributions to the development of the region came in the form of working the land through physical labor as migrant workers.

3.3 Migratory Wage Labor

The Metis, Cree and Chippewa people responded to the depletion of bison and the advancement of Euro-American settlement throughout the 1800s by expanding their territories, extending social networks, and capitalizing on new opportunities. By the mid 1800s, Metis, Cree and Chippewa groups utilized the region of present-day Montana on a regular basis to hunt bison and other large game, trap furs, and conduct trade. Near the turn of the century, large farming and ranching operations replaced bison hunting and fur trade economies, and the Metis, Cree and Chippewa accommodated and embraced these changes. One characteristic that emerged among landless Indians groups in Montana during this time was their livelihood as migratory wage laborers. This economic niche involved the same organizational flexibility, occupational diversity, and mobility employed in pre- and post-fur trade eras.

The emergence of large farms and cattle ranches in Montana created a demand for labor that Metis, Cree and Chippewa people engaged in. Landless Indians became deeply nested in a unique economic niche selling their labor to white settlers in a variety of economic settings. They constructed roads, fences, and log houses for white settlers in places such as the Deer Lodge Valley, or broke horses and cut hay for large ranch outfits, such as the Worden Ranch near the Dearborn River.⁸³

In addition to working on farms and ranches owned by white settlers, landless Indians also secured seasonal employment on Indian reservations. For example, several Cree men were hired by tribal members on the Blackfoot Reservation to help harvest hay and other crops in the fall of 1889.⁸⁴ Not only did landless Indians actively participate in the agricultural development of the region, their labor contributed to the forces that propelled white settlement in Montana. For instance, the advancement of the Great Northern Railway across the Montana Highline during the 1890s provided another source of employment for landless Indian people. Fred Nault describes how his father, Napoleon Nault, and his maternal grandfather, William Boushie, worked as dirt movers on the railroad being constructed between Havre, Montana, and Spokane, Washington, from 1890 to 1893.⁸⁵ While these jobs provided steady income throughout the summer months, the seasonal nature of these types of work required the Indians to supplement their incomes in other ways.

The income derived from working on rural farms and ranches was supplemented by selling a variety of items. Some individuals sold personal items, such as their horses, for additional income, or made beadwork items and coat racks or chairs made of polished antlers and cow horns. This supplementary income enabled these groups to purchase food and needed supplies before migrating to other areas for summer employment.⁸⁶ During the winter months, when seasonal work was not available, landless Indian groups moved near various Montana towns where they survived by hunting small game or through the charity of local white citizens. Oftentimes they utilized the city dumps and slaughterhouses.

One element of landless Indian history in Montana is their utilization of city dumps and slaughterhouses. While this aspect of landless Indian history signifies the realities of their starvation and poverty, these areas provided items that were essential to the Indians economic survival. Landless Indians utilized items discarded by the dominant society and transformed them into something they could use or resell. For instance, the “Cree camp stove” was constructed out of old washtubs, which was efficient because it was a commonly discarded object that was easy to find and they “threw heat well.”⁸⁷ The slaughterhouses were likely the source of cow horns, which landless Indians collected, polished, and sold to tourists in a variety of forms. This alertness to useable objects in their environment ensured the landless Indians’ long-term economic viability and survival.



Figure 1. This photo, titled “Cree Indians on the outskirts of Butte,” was taken by John Baptist, a tea salesman, as he rode his carriage down the streets of Butte in winter 1900. The man in the middle is carrying a cow horn chair, which is an item that Cree and Metis made and sold. Negative# 9104-53, Historic Photo Archive, Portland, Oregon.

The various types of work Montana's landless Indians were involved in are often presented in culturally distancing terms, and, as anthropologist Patricia Albers explains, much of what has been written about American Indian wage labor comes from the perspective of their unemployment or lack of paid work.⁸⁸ While landless Indians worked as wage laborers, small commodity producers, or sellers of crafts and other handiwork, these types of economic livelihoods have not been considered as actual work. For this reason, Native labor was often distanced from the larger economies in which it was nested, and was relegated to a world outside of the emerging dominant economy.⁸⁹

3.4 The 1894 Cree Sun Dance

One aspect of the landless Indians' economic life began during the 1890s and was achieved through the perpetuation of the Indian's spiritual belief. During their early years as Landless Indians, the Cree maintained their religious and spiritual beliefs through ceremonies, such as the annual Sun Dance. Known specifically among Cree and Ojibwa as the Thirst(ing) Dance, this ceremony represented a coalescence of social and religious activity whereby the past was brought into the present for the future by renewing the spiritual relationship between the people and supreme beings, reaffirming individual cultural belonging and membership, and ensuring the future health and prosperity of the community. The ceremony was also a time when various leaders gathered to discuss important matters relevant to the community, and family and friends reunited after extended periods of separation. In spring 1894, several Cree bands assembled near Great Falls in preparation for this traditional communal ceremony. The growing Indian encampment at the outskirts of town, however, drew the attention of nearby Great Falls

community members. This attention would bring economic opportunity as well as social and religious persecution to the Cree.

Two Great Falls entrepreneurs, Joe Lessard and John P. Dyas, saw financial opportunity in the Indian gathering. Lessard and Dyas visited the encampment and met Little Bear, proposing to him that the Indians hold their ceremony in conjunction with the upcoming June 15 Cascade County Fair. Little Bear agreed to the idea, and entered into a business contract with Lessard and Dyas as acting managers of the event.⁹⁰

Little Bear, Young Boy, and interpreter Joe Rosette, accompanied Lessard and Dyas in a public meeting before members of the Great Falls Chamber of Commerce to secure their endorsement.⁹¹ In the meeting, Lessard described the show, consisting of two hundred Indians engaged in a sham battle, horse races, and dancing, as a “drawing card” for the fair. The Indian dance would entice hundreds of white citizens to the fair to witness the exhibition, and guaranteed quality entertainment for the spring tour of the State Press Association, scheduled to arrive in Great Falls during fair week. The contract also provided guarantees to safeguard against any trouble the Indians may cause. The dance would be devoid of offensive elements, a presence of local police force would ensure order within the Indian camp, and a strict order prohibited alcohol. With these assurances the Chamber of Commerce granted their approval of the Cree Sun Dance, and the event was scheduled to take place during the Cascade County Fair on the 14th, 15th and 16th of June.⁹² If the event at Great Falls was successful, Lessard and Dyas hoped to extend the Indian exhibition in a tour across Montana.

Lessard and Dyas' idea to tour the "Cree Sun Dance" across Montana in 1894 was inspired by the popularity and financial success of William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody and his nationally known Wild West Show, which achieved a climatic performance one year earlier at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The popularity of Cody's Wild West show grew dramatically throughout the 1880s and 1890s, but also became the focus of humanitarian criticisms that considered the shows regressive to government policies of civilizing Indians because they glorified a savage past.⁹³

The images of Indians generated by Wild West shows contradicted the images desired by the Indian Office of Indians achieving a civilized life as farmers and ranchers. In contrast, Wild West shows provided Indians with an economic opportunity that some officials in the Indian Office acknowledged and supported. The exhibition in Great Falls was promoted as a "Cree Sun Dance" for exotic appeal to a non-Indian audience, and incorporated elements of horse racing, dancing, and sham battles, the latter of which was a highly popularized event in Wild West shows.⁹⁴

Reports of the proposed Sun Dance and its endorsement by city officials infuriated Great Falls protestant ministers, who became dedicated to preventing the Indian exhibition. After meeting with county Sheriff Josephus Hamilton and Cascade county commissioners, the clergy drew up a resolution against the proposed Sun Dance in Great Falls on the grounds that the "brutal...revoltingly cruel [and] indecent" ceremony hindered the "enlightened, orderly and progressive community" of Great Falls by turning loose "several hundred idle, lazy, shiftless barbarians."⁹⁵ In an effort to pacify concerns

and promote understanding, Little Bear publicly invited the ministers to visit the Indian encampment and hold religious services.⁹⁶

On May 27, Presbyterian Reverend R. McClellan Ramsey, accompanied by John Dyas and W.T. Houston, arrived at the Indian camp two miles west of the Great Falls fairgrounds on Sun River Road. Also present was a reporter for the *Havre Advertiser*, who described the camp as consisting of forty-five lodges and 150 Indian men, women and children. At the west end of the camp sat the large “royal tepee of Little Bear,” ornamented with images of eagles perched on mountains. Adjacent to Little Bear’s lodge sat the “temple of worship, where the braves congregate to do homage to the sun.”⁹⁷ After the Indians and their guests gathered near the main lodge, Ramsey was invited into the lodge and seated within the circle. Little Bear also entered the lodge, and seated himself across from Ramsey. Before him sat two red clay pipes, each of which he filled with tobacco and passed around the circle. After the pipes had been passed around the circle, Little Bear addressed the group through his interpreter:

We are here today to worship the Great Spirit. He brought us into the world and has taken care of us. My people take this method of expressing our gratitude. God put us here to love each other. Every day I and my people ask mercy of God, and thank him for feeding us and keeping us strong and healthy. For two days and two nights I do not eat. Every year since I was born I have worshiped my God at this season of the year. I do not think it right for the white people to stop me from holding my sun dance. It is my method of devotion and my people want it. We mean no harm to anyone, but want to save our souls. My people cut their skin in the shoulders. Christ was put on the cross and had nails driven through his feet and his hands the same as my people do. But if the white men object we will not do this. We do not want trouble with the white race. They are good to us and when we get through with our devotion those Indians who came here to dance will scatter as the birds to pick up a crumb here and a crumb there on which to live. My people are good people,

and we will do no wrong. The light, the air, the water and the birds are free and we also want to be free and be good so that the Great Spirit will smile with gladness and call us his children. I have done.⁹⁸

When Little Bear had finished, he invited Reverend Ramsey to speak among his people.

After a sermon dedicated to the life of Christ, Ramsey assured the Indians that God would “watch over and protect them if they were good and true and right, and led a pure and good life.”⁹⁹

The aim of Ramsey’s oration was the conversion of the Indians and their strict adherence to Christian beliefs and values, as Indians could not lead pure and good lives if engaged in brutal and savage customs. In contrast, Little Bear’s invitation to meet in council, smoke the pipe, and exchange dialog with the minister collectively represent his intention to negotiate two different systems of religious belief. While Little Bear openly expressed his displeasure with the efforts of whites to prohibit the Sun Dance, he indicated a willingness to make accommodations by eliminating intrinsic elements of the ceremony that were perceived as offensive to Christian ideals. Despite Little Bear’s efforts to promote mutual understanding and respect between contrasting views, state officials pressed forward to prohibit the Sun Dance.

To exercise state powers in banning the dance, Governor John E. Rickards and Attorney General Henry J. Haskell sought a source of authority from which they could legally justify their actions. In addition to moral and ethical arguments, Haskell and Rickards argued that the issue was a matter of public safety because the Sun Dance incited the Indians to commit acts of violence. Attorney General Haskell argued, “We are not required to sit down supinely and tolerate in our midst such practices of religious

fanaticism by a band of vagabond Cree Indians, which brutal customs sharpens their appetit [sic] for crime and excites their frenzy for rapine and slaughter. Our safety from such a pest is in its absolute suppression.”¹⁰⁰

To justify executive interference in banning the dance, Haskell compared the regulation of gypsies by the European government to the Indians status as non-ward “Canadian Crees.” If the Indians were wards of the United States, Haskell stated, “there would be no danger of them indulging in the sun dance, which is forbidden by the rules of the interior.” Haskell continued, “What the American people will not permit its wards to engage in as a religious rite ought certainly to be denied to the wards of a foreign country.”¹⁰¹

On June 5, Governor Rickards issued a proclamation prohibiting the Sun Dance in the state of Montana.

Investigation...convines me that it is not only inhuman and brutalizing, unnatural and indecent, and therefore abhorrent to Christian civilization, but that its aims and purposes are a menace to the peace and welfare of communities. My information...leads me to regard the proposed exhibition as wholly inconsistent with Christian civilization. ...the revolting ceremonials of the dance and its tendency to stimulate and inspire a warlike spirit in the hearts of the red men...warrant prompt and effective measures for its suppression. ...Therefore, I, John E. Rickards, by virtue of the authority vested in me, as governor of the state of Montana, do hereby prohibit within the limits of this state the festival known as the sun dance and the local authorities of the several counties are directed to take such steps as may be necessary in their respective communities to enforce this inhibition.¹⁰²

Lessard and Dyas filed an injunction in Cascade county district court to prevent legal interference with the Sun Dance, but it was denied on the grounds that the dance was in violation of federal statues on the subject.¹⁰³ While the governor’s proclamation satisfied

the interest of Great Falls protestant missionaries and reformers in general, it raised more issues than it solved problems.

The governor's actions brought discomfort to Indian Service officials. While federal regulations prohibited the Sun Dance within the limits of Indian reservations, this did not apply to the actions of Indians outside of federal jurisdiction. The Indian Service viewed the governor's proclamation as an unfortunate overreaction and excessive use of state power. According to the Indian Service, "the Crees have never given any trouble or annoyance to the federal authorities. It is believed that a genuine sun dance is not contemplated."¹⁰⁴ Public outcry and the resulting proclamation effectively brought an end to the Indian exhibition in Great Falls. For Little Bear, the importance of holding the ceremony was not negotiable.

The controversy over the Sun Dance in Great Falls drew unwanted negative attention to Little Bear and the Indians. At the onset of trouble in Great Falls, Little Bear made plans to move the camp north and hold the ceremony near Havre sometime in early June.¹⁰⁵ By May 24, the *Havre Advertiser* reported that preparations for the dance were underway as "runners have been dispatched to the several Cree camps and also to other tribes who are upon friendly terms with them."¹⁰⁶ At some point during the first week of June, Little Bear and the Indians left Great Falls and moved northeast to Havre to carry out the Sun Dance as they originally intended.

The annual Sun Dance took place two miles east of Havre on the 15th, 16th and 17th of June 1894. Members of the Gros Ventre and Assiniboiné tribes, several bands of Cree from Canada, and a small handful of Havre citizens attended the three-day

ceremony.¹⁰⁷ On June 21, 1894, the weekly *Havre Advertiser* reported “They Danced...with all the torture attachments.”¹⁰⁸ Eight dancers who were unable to complete the three days and nights of fasting and dancing paid “the price or their deliverance” in horses. Another participant drug a buffalo skull attached to his back by thongs across the prairie and then cut 40 pieces of flesh from his arms in supplication. The fact that the Sun Dance had taken place despite the governor’s proclamation shocked Montana’s white communities. The *Helena Daily Independent* responded to the account in the Havre newspaper that “It Was Horrible If True” and “It Was A Brutal Affair.” Despite this reaction, Helena engaged Little Bear and the Cree to travel to the Queen City and home of Governor Rickards to perform their exhibition during the town’s Fourth of July celebration.¹⁰⁹

Little Bear and two hundred Cree, accompanied by Joe Lessard, arrived at the Helena fairgrounds on July 2, 1894. The controversy and subsequent proclamation surrounding the Sun Dance performance in Great Falls seemed to dissolve into thin air. In fact, Helena Mayor Elbert D. Weed requested permission from Governor Rickards for the Cree to use guns from the armory for their sham battle – a request to which Governor Rickards complied.¹¹⁰ On the morning of the Fourth, a procession of Army regulars, fraternal organizations, and Cree Indians marched in the annual celebratory parade through Helena’s downtown district. That afternoon, hundreds of Helena spectators attended the Indian sham battle, dancing, and horse races at the fairgrounds. The *Helena Daily Independent* declared the day’s festivities as “great and glorious in the true spirit of friendly democracy.”¹¹¹ In the three days following the Fourth of July celebration, the

“Last of the Sun Dances” was conducted by the Indians at the fairgrounds in conjunction with “a half-breed dance.”¹¹²

The success of the exhibition in Helena took the Indians to Butte, Montana, where they hosted a similar celebration at the Marcus Daly Racetrack. According to the *Anaconda Standard*, the two-day festivity, lead by Chiefs Hole-In-Blanket, Little Bear, Buffalo Coat, and Ta-Noose, included dancing, horse racing, and a large feast. The event was attended by hundreds of area residents who paid one-dollar admission and bet lucratively at the horse races.¹¹³ The 1894 summer exhibition of the “Sun Dance” across Montana generated cash income for the Indians and provided entertainment for Montana’s white citizenry. Underlying these obvious elements, however, resides the persistence of cultural belonging and spiritual belief through accommodation and adaptation.

The exhibition of the Sun Dance during county fairs and nationally patriotic celebrations was a necessary adaptation the Metis, Cree and Chippewa made in order to perpetuate a threatened belief system. The public display of cultural tradition combined horse racing, sham battles, and dancing alongside prayer and sacrifice. In this way, the Indians maintained strength and vitality as a people, while educating cultural outsiders about their traditional beliefs and customs. In addition, the Indians’ participation in these settings created a social arena in which whites accepted the Indians and their traditional customs.

White Montanans viewed Indian people who traveled across the state or settled temporarily in small enclaves at the outskirts of towns with negativity, suspicion, and

fear. However, traveling as part of an Indian show legitimized their presence and afforded them a temporary and tenuous acceptance among white townspeople. The display of Indian culture and ceremony during county fairs and events promoted noble images of Indians that white citizens readily accepted. Furthermore, the shows provided white citizens access to an exotic world of traditional Indian life that they believed was quickly vanishing. The 1894 exhibition of the Cree Sun Dance illustrates how the dichotomous relationship between white perceptions and Indian realities evolved into a mutually beneficial situation, whereby Indians could generate income and perpetuate their traditional beliefs as popular entertainment among Montana's white citizenry.



Figure 2: Photo titled "Cree Indian Sun Dancers No. 61" circa. 1900, Museum of the Rockies Photo Archives

This strategy for cultural survival is evident among other Montana Indian groups near the turn of the century. For instance, in 1900 the Blackfeet began holding their

annual Sun Dance in conjunction with the Fourth of July celebration in Browning.

According to one historian, the Blackfeet moved their traditional midsummer Sun Dance to “coincide with the patriotic white celebration of the birth of the United States – the Fourth of July.” By holding their traditional celebration “under the guise of a national holiday” the Blackfeet were able to maintain cultural strength and vitality, and perpetuate their traditional customs.¹¹⁴ The Crow also exhibited a similar form of adaptation and accommodation through their annual Crow Fair celebration. While Crow Fair originated in 1904 as an agricultural fair, devised by Crow Reservation Agent R. C. Reynolds to induce the Indians to farm and raise livestock, the Crow practiced traditional ceremonies, victory dances, sham battles, and gift giving in conjunction with agricultural displays of their garden produce, canned goods, and livestock.¹¹⁵ These examples illustrate how different ethnic groups perpetuated their traditional customs in dynamic ways as a response to a threatened way of life. The landless Metis, Cree and Chippewa who participated in the “Cree Sun Dance” during the 1894 summer found temporary social acceptance and generated income through the perpetuation of traditional belief.

3.5 Summary

The Spring Creek Metis’ success in receiving title to homestead land resulted because they applied for land during the last two decades of the 1800s, when white settlement in eastern Montana was still relatively low and less chances of conflict to arise between white homesteaders and Indian people. Metis families who applied for land in the first two decades of the 1900s, such as the Boushie family in Dupuyer, met with increased difficulty in actually securing title to land due to increased white settlement and

scrutiny. The events of the 1885 Rebellion in Canada contributed to negative stereotypes of “landless Indians” in Montana as “Canadian foreigners” who had no legal right to reside in the United States, despite the fact that many of the Indians were born here or had become naturalized citizens. Furthermore, the prominent livelihood of Metis families as seasonal wage laborers prevented homesteading Indian families from proving up on homestead land due to the necessity of leaving homesteads for extended periods of time to hunt, or for seasonal employment on farms and ranches throughout Montana. White land speculators viewed this absence as inappropriate land use, and the general land office upheld these views by canceling Metis land claims and passing the land into the hands of white settlers.

Indian homesteaders also experienced the rejection of their homesteads by county land offices that denied Indian settlement on the public domain as citizens based upon their ethnic designation as Indian. Many Indians from the Turtle Mountain Reservation who took land under the 1904 McCumber agreement were later denied rights to land by county land office officials and white settlers based upon their physical appearance as Indian. All of these factors contributed to an increase of the landless Indian population in Montana by the turn of the century.

Chapter 4

Landless Indian Settlements

The permanent settlement of Metis, Cree and Chippewa groups in Montana occurred at various times in history. The southernmost bands of Canadian Plains Cree are believed to have occupied present-day Montana on a seasonal basis as early as the 1830s. The large seasonal hunting camps of Metis are recorded in documentary sources as early as the 1860s, but most likely existed prior to that time.¹¹⁶ It has been suggested that by the 1900s, nearly four thousand Metis lived across the state in the Teton, Sun, Marias, Dearborn, Yellowstone and Milk River valleys.¹¹⁷

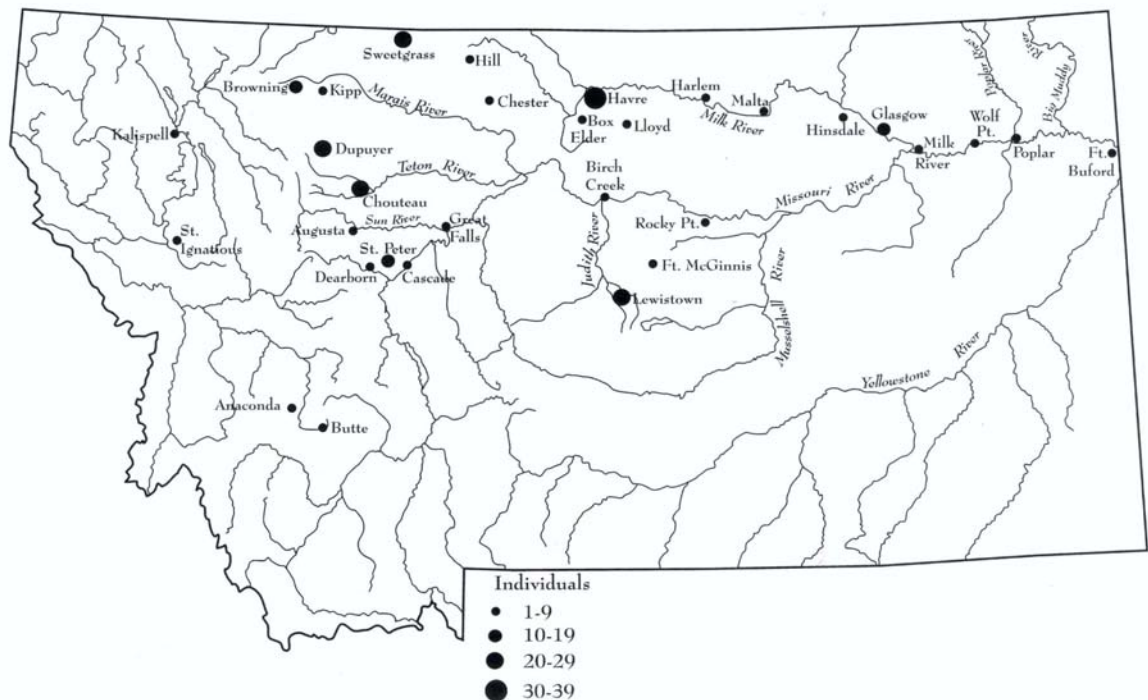


Figure 3: “Metis settlement sites in Montana, circa 1900,” Map by Gerhard Ens in “The Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests,” p. 150

4.1 Early Settlements

The early settlement patterns of Metis, Cree and Chippewa throughout Montana are associated with hunting trails and routes, trade posts, and railroads. As discussed earlier, traditional seasonal rounds of Metis and Cree hunters and trappers precluded the creation of the International Boundary between Canada and north central Montana, and persisted throughout historical times. The success of fur trade posts in Montana depended upon these seasonal movements. The details regarding the various locations of some early settlements have been lost to time, but the information contained on various maps of Montana provides a variety of placenames that allude to the presence of Metis, Cree and Chippewa in Montana.

For example, a modern day Montana map provides vague references to the evidence of the Metis, Cree and Chippewa people who actively shaped the state's history. Within the state of Montana, there are roughly ten places referred to as "Halfbreed," Half Breed," or "Breed." In addition, four sites utilize the term Cree, four sites utilize Chippewa, and roughly 50 sites utilize various forms of the term "French" (ie: French Creek, French Mine, French Town, Frenchie, Frenchy, and Frenchman). Historical maps also provide evidence of early settlements. For example, the 1865 Johnson Map of Montana indicates a "Half-Breed Settlement" on the northern edge of Flathead Lake in northwestern Montana.¹¹⁸ Historian John C. Jackson identifies this settlement as the ranch site of Basil Finlay (also called Pial), and the Broun family, both of Metis ancestry.¹¹⁹

The Milk River basin in Montana supported numerous Metis, Cree, and Chippewa settlements. Some of the earliest recorded settlements were in the Big Bend region of the Milk River, an area also referred to as Medicine Lodge or Medicine Rock, where Metis and Cree settled seasonally. Cree Crossing, located along Montana Highway 243 east of Saco, Montana, is the site of a modern-day bridge spanning the Milk River. In 1997, a proposal to realign Highway 243 and construct an all-season bridge across the Milk River led to salvage archaeology of the area. The interpretation of analytical and ethnohistoric data collected during archaeological investigations of the Cree Crossing site illustrates the continual use of the area from prehistoric to historic times, and acknowledges Metis and Cree use of the area.

The primary ethnohistoric data of the Cree Crossing site, including oral tradition and literary sources, provides evidence of the area's use by Gros Ventre, Assiniboiné, and Chippewa in protohistoric times, while use of the crossing by Metis and Cree increased during the historic period. The archaeological evidence illustrates a continual use of the area. The firm gravel bed at this section of the Milk River, which is atypical for the Milk River basin in this area, provided easy access across the river and a direct route to trade posts to the south, such as the Carroll post located near the confluence of the Musselshell and Missouri Rivers.¹²⁰ The name "Cree Crossing" was likely established by the time trader Francis Avila Janeaux accompanied by a group of Pembina Chippewa and Metis arrived in Montana Territory in 1872. Janeaux established his trade post, known as Janeaux Post or Fort Turnay, fifteen miles northeast of Cree Crossing.¹²¹

To the east of the Cree Crossing site is Frenchman's Creek, where several large Metis trading settlements were established in historic times. Frenchman's Creek (known in Canada as Frenchman's River, Riviere Blanche, or Whitemud River) originates at Cypress Lake in the Cypress Hills region of Saskatchewan, Canada. From this point, Frenchman's Creek flows southeasterly until it converges with the Milk River in Montana. Between 1860 and 1880, at least two large Metis settlements were recorded along the Frenchman's Creek valley in Montana. While the U.S. Department of Indian Affairs granted the Metis permission to winter on an annual basis in Montana for the purposes of trade, allegations arose in 1871 that Metis in the settlement were trading arms and ammunition to the Sioux. In an effort to prevent the trading community from selling weapons and ammunition to "hostile Sioux," the Army conducted a night raid in October 1871, finding 60 Metis families and 20 Santee Sioux living in cabins along a five-mile stretch of Frenchman's Creek. The Army set fire to the cabins and two large trade houses, confiscated all personal belongings, and forced the inhabitants north across the border.¹²² This event marked the beginning of conflict between the Metis and the U.S. Army. In fact, the Metis that continued to settle along Frenchman's Creek endured several military attacks at the hand of Colonel John Gibbon in 1875, and again in 1879 under the direction of General Nelson Miles.¹²³

To the west of the Milk River settlement and lying in the western shadow of the widely known Whoop-Up Trail, is the old north-south trade route extending between Fort Shaw, Montana, and Fort Macleod, Canada, known as the Great Falls-Fort Macleod trail, or Riplinger Road. The town of Dupuyer, Montana, was the epicenter of early trade

activity along this trade route, and local Dupuyer history reveals a strong French influence and early settlement by Metis and Cree.

Historical sources indicate that the name of the townsite of Dupuyer is derived from a French word meaning “delouse,” and received this name after a party of trappers stopped at here and removed lice from their clothing, bedding, and bodies. It has also been suggested that the French incorrectly translated the Indian name for the area as *depouille*, which was later translated to “delouse.”¹²⁴ Other sources indicate that Dupuyer Creek was originally called “Fat Back,” and is a derivative of the French word *depouille*, or *de pouilleux*, which refers to the back fat of the buffalo – “a delicacy by Indian and white settlers’ standards alike.”¹²⁵

Dupuyer resident Ila Salois Agee credits the Dupuyer name to a Salois man whose name translated in English to “Back Fat,” and who settled on Dupuyer Creek in the early 1880s. According to Ila Agee, her paternal grandfather, Toussaint Salois, and his brothers, Sam and Gabe Salois, settled on Dupuyer Creek around 1885. Toussaint, who served as Louis Riel’s lieutenant during the 1885 Rebellion, remained in the Dupuyer Creek area until he was 92 years old. At that time, Toussaint left Dupuyer to live with his son on Birch Creek in 1935, where he died shortly thereafter.¹²⁶ Ila Agee’s maternal “Grandfather Bousha” also owned land west of Dupuyer in the mountains. This area was referred to locally as “Little Chicago” because of the numerous tents and shacks in the area. According to Agee, “They said it was just like Chicago with so many people.” Grandfather Bousha eventually sold his land to a white man by the name of

Willis Rigby, and moved to Canada “with his cattle and horses and two or three wagons.”¹²⁷

In 1887, J.D.C. Atkins, then commissioner of the Office of Indian Affairs, acknowledged the presence of “200 British Cree Refugees” camped at Dupuyer Creek. In 1888, General E. S. Otis, the commander at Fort Assiniboine, Montana, also described a band of 160 Cree Indians who, since the summer of 1885, made regular movements between an encampment near Fort Assiniboine on the Milk River and another camp near Fort Shaw in the Sun River Valley, located west of Great Falls.¹²⁸

One community that exemplifies the Metis and Cree people’s desire to remain in Montana was nestled in the canyon along the South Fork of the Teton River, roughly 25 miles west of Choteau, Montana. While no definitive date exists for the South Fork settlement, the 1900 and 1910 Teton County Census suggests that most of the families living in the South Fork canyon came to Montana between 1876 and 1890.¹²⁹ Today, a Metis Cemetery and the remains of several log structures can be found in this narrow canyon as reminders of a once thriving community that supported roughly 100 people at its height in the 1890s.

The South Fork canyon is abundant with resources. Water, grass, timber and wild game flourish in the canyon. The shelter of the surrounding mountains promotes a more temperate climate in the canyon than the surrounding Plains. The history of the South Fork illustrates that the Metis families living in the canyon utilized the ample resources for personal use and for trade. Wild meat, berries, pemmican, and garden produce was hauled by horse and wagon on a two- or three day trip to Choteau where the goods were

traded at Hirshberg's Store in Choteau for beef. South Fork residents also utilized their skill at woodhawking as a primary source of income and trading power.¹³⁰ While the abundant resources and protective shelter of the canyon contribute to the desirability of the South Fork as a place to live, the South Fork canyon residents preferred the seclusion of the area because it enabled them to remain unnoticed.

The Army's efforts to rid Montana of Canadian Indians intensified during the 1890s. In 1896, Congress officially sanctioned the 'Deportation Era' of Metis, Cree and Chippewa history in Montana with passage of a bill appropriating \$5,000 for the removal of Cree Indians in Montana and their delivery to Canadian authorities.¹³¹ As the army canvassed Montana for "Canadian Cree" Indians, isolated communities like the South Fork became areas of refuge. In spring 1896, the Choteau newspaper reported that the "local Crees are living in fear" that if they returned to Canada they were certain to meet death. Instead, they "prefer the alternative of fleeing to the mountains and becoming 'bad Indians.'"¹³² On June 26, 1896, the *The Montanian* reported, "For a week prior to the advent of the soldiers, not a day passed but a family or two of Crees passed through Choteau on their way to the mountains where we suppose they feel secure."¹³³ The seclusion of the South Fork community provided protection from the scrutiny of non-Indians.

The trade era between 1850 and 1880 brought numerous Metis, Cree and Chippewa to the Upper Missouri region. Many of the communities that were established during this time were short lived in the face of a changing social, economic and political environment. A rapid decline in buffalo during the 1870s diminished trade economies,

and the increase of military control along the United States-Canadian border to control whisky trafficking and cross-border migrations of Indians prevented these communities from flourishing. The Front Range communities, such as the isolated communities along the South Fork of the Teton and in Dupuyer, would remain vibrant until the economic Depression of the 1930s, when populations in these communities moved closer to urban centers and other areas as social and economic necessity dictated.

4.2 Urban Life

Some of the literature concerning landless Indian history in Montana characterizes the years between 1885 and 1916 as years of “wandering homeless from one reservation to another, from one city dump to another.”¹³⁴ This generalized description of early landless Indian history in Montana requires further examination in order explain why they were wandering, and what were they searching for? Were they really lost? Or, were landless Indians embedded within a dynamic socio-economic lifestyle that possessed both direction and purpose but was unperceivable to and discounted by cultural outsiders?

Montana’s white citizens criticized the wandering lifestyle of landless Indians in the state as a detriment to the safety of white citizens and an impediment to settlement. The state’s newspapers frequently accused the wandering Indian bands of looting stock and game and spreading smallpox.¹³⁵ While their wandering lifestyle was often a source of frustration among Montana’s white citizens, the temporary settlement of landless Indians near Montana’s white communities induced equal amounts of anger, resentment, and fear. More often than not, these negative reactions were unfounded.

In 1891, a group of Cree wintering in the mountains north of Helena near the small community of Craig evoked unwarranted fear and contempt among the area's white citizens. In January 1891, three enraged Wolf Creek residents telegraphed Colonel Charles Curtis at Fort Harrison in Helena, "Three hundred Indians and more coming close to Wolf Creek, all armed and bucks. They have bought all ammunition at Craig...send assistance, 100 stands of arms and ammunition at least."¹³⁶ Several days later, Craig storeowner B. F. Stickney wrote a letter to the *Helena Daily Independent* exonerating himself of the accusation that he would sell "ammunition to any Indian in war time, and I am the only one selling goods in Craig and they must mean me."¹³⁷

Stickney continued, "It does not stand to reason that I would sell them cartridges so they could murder my own family if they should break out." Despite Stickney's obvious fears that the Indians possessed the potential to "break out," his letter expresses a reality of the Indians in the camp, consisting of five men, three women, and two children, who were busy "dressing horns and tanning hides for market and selling them daily at Craig when the trains pass." Furthermore, the income derived from this work was spent at Stickney's store on food and other provisions.¹³⁸ This incident illustrates the common dichotomy between white perceptions and landless Indian realities in Montana near the turn of the century. Despite the realities, the complaints of white citizens compelled government action to place the Indians on land where they could become "self-supporting."

4.3 Metis, Cree and Chippewa and the Blackfeet Reservation

The Metis, Cree, and Chippewa maintained a network of social kinship across Montana. Many lived on existing reservations with friends and relatives and intermarried among members of various tribes. In fact, Metis, Cree, and Chippewa history can be found on the Fort Belknap and Fort Peck Reservations, as well as the Crow, Northern Cheyenne, Salish-Kutenai (Flathead), and Blackfeet Reservations. All of these dynamic histories are an important aspect of the larger story, but to give each a thorough examination is not possible within the limitations of this paper. I have chosen to examine the history of landless Metis, Cree and Chippewa who came to live on the Blackfeet Reservation.

Throughout historic times, an array of distinct Metis, Cree, and Chippewa communities developed within or adjacent to the present-day boundaries of the Blackfeet Reservation. Blackfeet residents today identify specific “Metis-Cree” communities that existed along the border of the reservation at Birch Creek and Cut Bank Creek. One community on the reservation was at Heart Butte, and is referred to by Blackfeet residents as “Canvas City.” Another settlement is referred to as “Boushie Hill,” which is located in present-day East Glacier. This settlement is identified today as a Metis-Cree community and has obvious ties to the Boushie (Bousha) family.¹³⁹

Boushie Hill is located on the northwestern edge of the East Glacier community, and extends north and south across the Great Northern Railroad (GNR) right-of-way. From available sources it appears that the settlement of Boushie Hill likely coincided with the construction of the GNR across northern Montana in 1892, which furnished a

plat for the town site. Originally known as Midvale, the town consisted of a train depot, section crew dwellings, and “a few scattered shacks, mostly across Midvale Creek from the present town.”¹⁴⁰ The GNR passed through Midvale, over Marias Pass, and into Kalispell by 1892. It was at this time that William Boushie, Fred Nault’s grandfather, worked for the railroad and settled in this area. In addition to employment on the railroad, local history tells us that Midvale’s Indian residents worked in the winter selling stove wood to neighboring towns, and were employed as “ice cutters” carving large blocks of ice from Two Medicine Lake to be shipped east by rail. Other seasonal employment could be found ranching, trapping, and bootlegging.

The Cut Bank Creek community is mentioned in the book *Frontier Editor*, by author and early Montana newspaper editor Dan Whetstone. In his book, Whetstone describes an incident with a Cree woman he encountered while working at the *Pioneer Press* in Cut Bank, Montana. Recalling events of winter 1909, Whetstone describes how Nick, the camp cook, discovered a teenage girl lying lifeless in a snowdrift outside of the *Pioneer Press* building. Nick brought her into the printing office and left her with Whetstone while he went to seek help at a nearby Cree encampment. According to Whetstone

While he was absent the girl revived and like a young antelope bounded for the door, with little screams of fright. I locked the door and soon Nick the Cook showed up, in company with two young Crees who claimed her as one of their band. ‘She Lizzy White Beaver, belong in Rocky Boy tribe,’ said one of the men, in fairly good English accents. Nick went outside and watched as the larger of the two hoisted the delighted Lizzy over his left shoulder and they struck out through a foggy winter blizzard for the Cree camp near the Cut Bank River.¹⁴¹

Whetstone's story, while exaggerated to entertain his readers of the time, provides evidence of the Cree community along Cut Bank Creek and associates it with the Rocky Boy band. In fact, between 1909 and 1911, Little Bear and his band camped along the eastern boundary of the Blackfeet Reservation at Cut Bank Creek in anticipation of receiving allotments of land along with Rocky Boy and his band who were being allotted land at the Blackfeet Reservation in Babb, Montana.

The community of Babb, Montana, is located ten miles from the Canadian border in the northeastern section of the Blackfeet Reservation. This community dates historically to the 1874 Kennedy Post, which served as a major trade center among the Blackfeet, Kootenai, and Cree people. The land adjacent to the Babb town site is referred to in historical literature as Babb Flats or Moccasin Flats, and is known historically as the site of numerous confrontations between these rival groups. In 1885, Little Bear came initially to this area after the Metis and Cree uprisings in Canada.¹⁴²

The history of the settlement of Metis, Cree and Chippewa at Babb can be traced back to the 1896 deportation efforts by the United States government, and the failure of that effort. As several historians have documented, the 1896 deportation of "British Cree" failed because most of the Metis, Cree, and Chippewa people who were sent to Canada ultimately returned to Montana where, over the next thirteen years, they existed largely as they had the previous fifty years. Many continued to sell their labor on a seasonal basis, migrating to various towns, and the farms and ranches in between, for

employment. By the early 1900s, however, these patterns of mobility became increasingly difficult with the advancing settlement of non-Indians in Montana.

White settlers moving into the region brought both fear and prejudice of Indian people, particularly Indians who lived outside of the confinement of Indian reservations. The increase in white settlement also brought a decline in available wild game, and state imposed game laws and the fencing of property hindered the ability of Indian people to move freely and hunt. The *Choteau Acantha* summarized this situation in a 1905 editorial, stating that “Arms and diplomacy could not conquer them, but drought and barbed wire have done the work.”¹⁴³ These historical elements contributed to the settlement of some Metis, Cree and Chippewa people at Babb on the Blackfeet Reservation in 1909.

In an effort to settle the landless Indian problem in Montana, United States Indian Inspector Frank C. Churchill was sent to the state in 1908 to determine the location of “Rocky Boy’s Band of Chippewa Indians,” ascertain their legal status, and find available land where the Indians could be permanently placed. Soon after his arrival in Montana, Churchill located Rocky Boy and 50 members of his band near Garrison, Montana. Rocky Boy informed Churchill that aside from his group, many others were located in small encampments throughout Montana near various towns such as Billings, Havre and the Flathead Reservation. Churchill expressed frustration when he reported to his superiors that determining the Indians legal status was nearly impossible. Not only were the Cree and Chippewa bilingual, “the Cree’s and those claiming to be Chippewa’s have

intermarried more or less.”¹⁴⁴ Aside from these frustrations, Churchill moved forward with the plan to find land for the settlement of the Indians.

To expedite the settlement of landless Indians as efficiently as possible, Churchill began searching for available land upon existing Indian reservation in Montana. Churchill initially traveled to the Blackfeet Reservation and met with allotting agent Charles E. Roblin, who informed Churchill that land in the northwestern portion of the reservation might be suitable for the settlement of Chippewa-Cree. Churchill proceeded to the area and examined the available land along the St. Mary’s River, but determined that the isolation of the area was not suitable for the Chippewa and Cree who made their living “cutting cord wood, hunting coyotes...and making a few trinkets for sale.”¹⁴⁵

Churchill then traveled to north central Montana and met with Fort Belknap Superintendent William R. Logan, who informed Churchill he was “unalterably opposed to having the Indians upon that reservation.” According to Logan, not only would a Chippewa-Cree presence negatively influence the Indians under his care, their Canadian status afforded them no rights to the benefits of his reservation.¹⁴⁶ Churchill’s visit with the superintendent at Fort Peck met with the same demise, as “the Indians under his care are not friendly toward French mixed-bloods.”¹⁴⁷ Churchill’s optimism brightened with word that a large tract of land in Valley County, Montana, was open for settlement.

In 1908 and 1909, the settlement of Valley County in eastern Montana was spurred by several historical events. A portion of the lands comprising Valley County were originally part of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, but the increase of non-Indian squatters and homesteaders in the area pressured Congress to pass the Fort Peck

Allotment Act of 1908. This Act required that the Fort Peck Reservation land be surveyed and allotted to tribal members, and the remaining surplus lands be opened to settlement.¹⁴⁸ At the same time, members of the Turtle Mountain Reservation in northeastern North Dakota were in the process of receiving public domain allotments in Valley County. With the potential for acquiring land in this location, Churchill immediately headed for Culbertson in northeastern Montana to secure land for Rocky Boy's band.

Upon arriving in Culbertson, Churchill found the Turtle Mountain allotment process plagued with problems. Turtle Mountain Chippewa who moved to Valley County to settle on their assigned allotments found white settlers claiming a prior squatter's right to the land. In addition to numerous squatter's claims, Culbertson residents were opposed to the settlement of Indians in the area because, they argued, the presence of Indians would negatively impact further settlement.¹⁴⁹ Despite the obvious problems, Churchill was determined to allot the Chippewa-Cree along with the Turtle Mountain Chippewa and devised a plan by which to carry out allotment. In order to alleviate future squatters from taking claims, Churchill requested that Valley County be withdrawn from further settlement. In order to determine the number of allotments needed, a census of Chippewa-Cree and other landless Indian groups across Montana had to be compiled (see Appendix A).¹⁵⁰ The Department of the Interior approved Churchill's plan and removed Valley County from settlement, and sent Special Allotting Agent John F. Armstrong to Montana to compile a census of the landless Indians and carry out a plan for their permanent settlement.

In June 1909, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Robert Valentine placed Special Allotting Agent John F. Armstrong in charge of carrying out the allotment of the landless Indians. Armstrong arrived in Helena on August 6, 1909, and located Rocky Boy and roughly twenty individuals camped at Birdseye near Fort Harrison, northwest of Helena.¹⁵¹ The other Indians remained at various locations throughout Montana in Billings, Havre, Garrison, Flathead Reservation, and as far west as DeSmet, Idaho. The process of gathering all Chippewa and Cree in one location took months. Just as different groups arrived at the Birdseye camp, others were leaving to find food, shelter, and grazing land for their horses. In an effort to keep Indians at the Birdseye camp, Armstrong arranged a deal with the Helena National Forest Reserve to employ the Indians in collecting pinecones at twenty-five cents per bushel.¹⁵² In October 1909, Armstrong reported that 153 Indians had arrived at the Birdseye camp, but the onset of winter weather placed the Indians in a destitute condition. Cold temperatures prevented further employment with the Forest Reserve collecting pinecones. The Indians horses were dying. Out of starvation, some of the Indians resorted to eating their horses, an action that Armstrong sought police control over the band to prevent them from eating the dead ponies.¹⁵³

The closure of Valley County to white settlement outraged local residents and county officials, whose complaints ultimately dictated the success of Churchill's plan. Culbertson resident Effa Goss claimed he had taken a squatter's right in Valley County in 1906 and had since improved his land with buildings, crops and livestock. "Why is it," Goss wrote the Department of Interior, "that a human has to half-starve to stay on one of

these free-homes,” and then find themselves “compelled to exist among a bunch of those dark skinned people, Called Indians.”¹⁵⁴ Culbertson Commercial Club member Paul Babcock argued that withdrawing the territory from settlement blocked immigration to Culbertson, creating financial losses to local businesses and merchants.¹⁵⁵ A final and decisive blow to the allotment in Valley County was a telegram sent to Commissioner Valentine bearing the signature of Louis Hill, president of the Great Northern Railway. The telegram, which reached Commissioner Valentine on October 25, 1909, reminded him of the agreement to construct a two million dollar branch line through Valley County prior to any decision setting aside land for “Canadian Indians.”¹⁵⁶ Two days later, on October 27, 1909, Commissioner Valentine authorized the re-opening of Valley County to settlement, and justified his action by citing the numerous white settlers occupying land in Valley County who are “wholly unadapted to the requirements of these Indians.”¹⁵⁷ The re-opening of Valley County to settlement meant land elsewhere was needed for the settlement of Chippewa and Cree. The only land available was the land on the Blackfeet Reservation.

Fort Belknap Superintendent William R. Logan, who remained opposed to the settlement of Chippewa and Cree on or near “his reservation,” suggested to Commissioner Valentine that the Blackfeet Reservation was the best place for settling the Chippewa-Cree.¹⁵⁸ Valentine received Logan’s recommendation as an “extremely desirable solution” to the landless Indian situation. Despite Churchill’s earlier assessment of the land at Blackfeet as too isolated and unsuited for the Chippewa and Cree, Valentine perceived the isolation of the area as ideal because it was far from white

settlement and the scrutiny of white settlers. Aware of Blackfeet contention toward having Chippewa and Cree on their land, the remote location placed Rocky Boy and his followers “least in contact with the Blackfeet Indians.” Knowing that the settlement plan would fail if discussed with the Blackfeet tribe, Valentine suggested the move “be done as quietly as possible, so as to avoid contact with the Indians of the Blackfeet Tribe.”¹⁵⁹

On the morning of November 13, 1909, the Chippewa, Cree and Metis were boarded on a train near the Helena fairgrounds and sent north to the Blackfeet Reservation. Upon their arrival at the Blackfeet Reservation, the Indians were to receive 80-acre allotments and employment working on the Milk River Diversion reclamation project.¹⁶⁰ The arrival of over 100 Metis, Cree and Chippewa at the Blackfeet Reservation on November 14 did not go unnoticed by the Blackfeet tribe as Commissioner Valentine hoped. The severity of the November winter weather on the Blackfeet Reservation prevented the immediate allotment of the band; rather, they were forced to locate at the agency in Browning for the duration of the winter. On November 19, 1909, the *Cut Bank Pioneer* reported that the Chippewa and Cree had been assigned an “earthly Happy Hunting Ground” on the Blackfeet Reservation, where “the Blackfeet reservation has been made ‘the goat.’”¹⁶¹ The Office of Indian Affairs presented a different view, proclaiming the move “accomplished to the entire satisfaction of the Indians themselves, the members of the Blackfeet tribe, and residents of Valley County.”¹⁶²

In spring 1910, Blackfeet Agent William McFatridge began allotting members of Rocky Boy’s band near Babb. By fall 1911, McFatridge reported that 101 Indians of

Rocky Boy's band had been allotted in that area, including Rocky Boy, his wife, and two sons, as well as members of the Papin, Gaurdipee, Mitchell, McGills, Morresette, Smith, and Wells families (see Appendix A).¹⁶³ While some of these families remained in the Babb area and intermarried among the Blackfeet, most of these individuals chose to leave the Blackfeet Reservation and live as they had in previous years near white communities where they had some control over their own destiny.

4.4 Summary

The various Metis, Cree and Chippewa settlements were dispersed across Montana in different geographical settings. The temporary winter camps and trade communities of Metis, Cree, and Chippewa along the Milk River gradually shifted between 1870 and 1900 to permanent settlements, such as the Spring Creek Metis settlement in Lewistown, along the fringes of white communities such as Great Falls, or were maintained in isolated settings along the Front Range. Landless Indians also settled near or on existing Indian reservations, either because they had family and friends living there, or were placed there by government action as in the case of the Babb community on the Blackfeet Reservation.

Anthropologist Patrick Douaud identified four main types of Metis settlement patterns throughout Canada between 1900 and the late 1950s. Douaud classifies these settlements as: Integrated settlements, which are characterized by Metis who permanently settled and adapted to the prevailing non-Metis culture around them; Urban Fringe settlements, represented by the Road Allowance people in Canada; Indian Reservation Fringe settlements; and Isolated settlements.¹⁶⁴ The various settlement patterns of Metis,

Cree and Chippewa found throughout Montana are comparable to the various settlement types found among the Canadian Metis.

The Spring Creek Metis settlement of Lewistown most closely represents an “integrated settlement” as defined by Douaud. The establishment of this community predated white settlement in this area, but as white settlement increased the Spring Creek Metis continually accommodated and adapted to the changing social and economic environment around them.

Similar to the “Road Allowance” Metis settlements in Canada, many of the Metis, Cree and Chippewa in Montana survived at the fringe of white settlements on public or county land, or along the railroad right-of-way.¹⁶⁵ These types of communities are illustrated by permanent settlements such as Hill 57 in Great Falls and Boushie Hill in East Glacier, but also include the temporary camps located near various towns throughout Montana. These temporary camps were utilized primarily during the winter months when travel was not practical and employment on farms and ranches was not available. Fringe settlements were located all along the Front Range and throughout the intermountain region near the communities of Garrison, Deer Lodge, Anaconda, and Butte. Fringe communities were also located near communities along the Highline, such as Havre and Wolf Point.

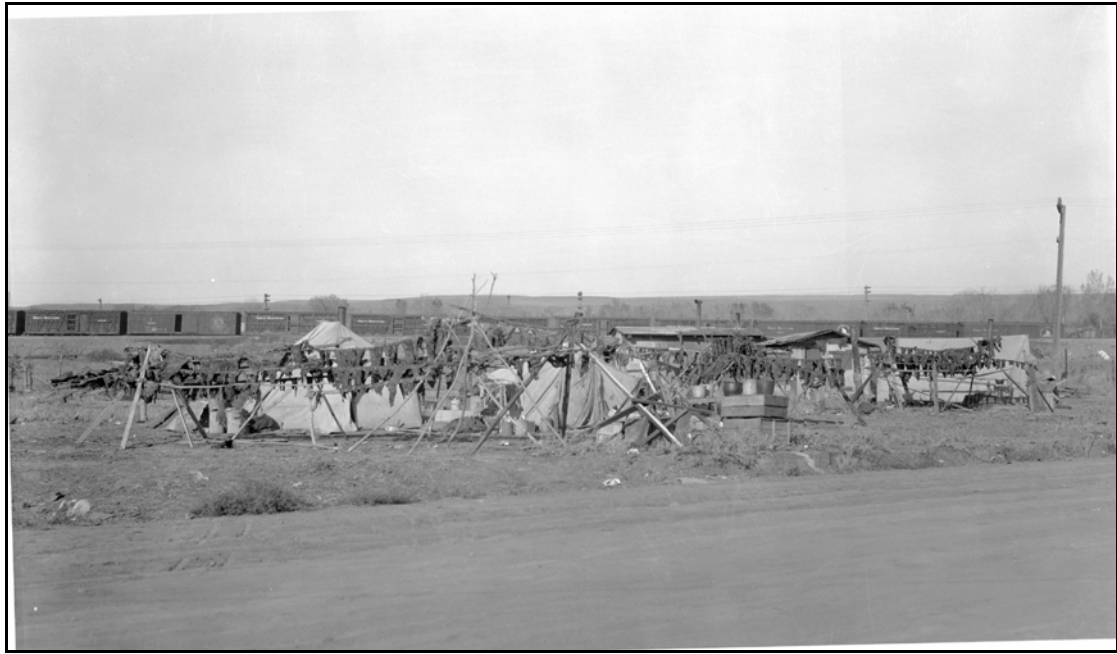


Figure 4: Landless Indian camps such as this were common in Montana throughout the early 1900s. This photograph is of a Cree camp along the railroad right-of-way near Havre, circa 1920. Fred Miller Collection, Montana State University Northern Photo Archives, Havre, MT.

The isolated communities include those along the Front Range, such as settlements in Dupuyer and along South Fork of the Teton River. These communities were supported economically by fishing, hunting and gathering, as well as woodhawking, small-scale gardening, and trading produce and other items in nearby white communities. The reservation communities included those at Babb, Heart Butte, and East Glacier, while others were located along the borders of the Blackfeet Reservation at Birch Creek and Cut Bank Creek.

For Montana's Metis, Cree and Chippewa, these settlement patterns, whether integrated, peripheral, or isolated, reflect the Indian's non-status position and their economic positions as livelihoods as migratory wage laborers. Between the late 1800s and early 1900s, the demographics of these settlements fluctuated in response to various

social, economic, and political changes. The creation of the Rocky Boy Reservation in 1916 would further reshape landless Indian identity by providing a small fraction of landless Indians a land base and legal identity through federal recognition as the Chippewa-Cree tribe. The creation of the reservation also effected the emergence of the landless Indian population known today as the Little Shell band of Chippewa Indians of Montana.

Chapter 5

Landlessness and the Rocky Boy Reservation

Life for the Metis, Cree and Chippewa living on the Blackfeet Reservation between 1909 and 1911 was economically and socially undesirable. The Indians who were given allotments found it impossible to live on the 80-acre parcels of grazing land. Many of the Indians did not want land on the Blackfeet Reservation, but wanted “to be free to travel from place to place.”¹⁶⁶ In order to alleviate these tensions, most of the band had left the Blackfeet Reservation by the winter of 1910 and returned to their temporary campsites throughout Montana.¹⁶⁷ The following December 1911, Rocky Boy’s brother Penneto and roughly 150 individuals left Browning for Helena, while Little Bear and about 50 individuals moved from the Cut Bank area to Havre.¹⁶⁸ Rocky Boy and 50 individuals remained on the Blackfeet Reservation until 1913, when the Fort Assiniboine Military Reservation lands in north central Montana were being opened for settlement.

Throughout the winter of 1913, government officials tried to compel Little Bear and Rocky Boy bands to return to the Blackfeet Reservation. Flathead Agent Fred C. Morgan located Little Bear and 54 Indians, 80 ponies, 15 wagons and buggies, and eleven tents camped on the Fort William Henry Harrison Military Reservation near Helena, but Little Bear refused to return to Browning because “the attitude of the Blackfeet toward them is as disagreeable as is the cold and rigorous winter weather of which Little Bear complains.”¹⁶⁹ Upon further investigation, Morgan discovered that

Rocky Boy and 25 Chippewa and Cree were traveling to Helena from Great Falls and that “all the Chippewas, Crees and homeless Indians in Montana and Idaho are to assemble in response to letters written to them by Little Bear requesting that they meet him in Helena” in anticipation of receiving land at the abandoned Fort Assinniboiné Military Reservation.¹⁷⁰ In fact, a large band of Chippewa and Cree were wintering on the abandoned Fort Assinniboiné Military Reservation, and had been since the winter of 1912. This group recognized Rocky Boy and Little Bear as their Chiefs, and together numbered about 600.¹⁷¹

Superintendent McFatridge continued to induce Little Bear and Rocky Boy to return to the Blackfeet Reservation. In December 1913, McFatridge found Little Bear and 125 band members at Great Falls “comfortably located in tents and small houses which they have built from lumber that was given them, so they tell me, by the railroad company.”¹⁷² In February 1914, Fort Belknap Agent Horton H. Miller located Rocky Boy in Havre with 150 Indians.

In 1916, Rocky Boy Reservation would be carved out of 170,000 acres of Fort Assinniboiné Military Reservation land. Initially, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Cato Sells supported the idea of granting the northern 20,000 acres of the military reserve to the Chippewa and Cree because it was “comparatively easy of irrigation with little expense, by gravity, from the waters of the Beaver and Big Sandy Creeks, and that the buildings at the abandoned Post...would make excellent quarters for housing these Indians until they could individually build homes on such land as might be allotted to them in severalty.”¹⁷³ The southern part of the military reserve, being “rough, broken, and

practically valueless except for grazing stock,” would require an extensive amount of capital in addition to the issuance of rations and clothing.¹⁷⁴ Despite these facts, the boundaries of the Rocky Boy Reservation would be defined ultimately by outside interests.

Between 1913 and 1915, the Office of Indian Affairs received countless complaints from Havre citizens regarding the settlement of the Chippewa and Cree near their community. In the end, these interests dictated the disposal of the land at Fort Assinniboine. The northern two thousand acres, including the Fort Assinniboine buildings, were granted to Northern Montana College of Havre as an agricultural experiment station. A ten thousand acre section of land along the eastern slope of the Bear Paw Mountains including the Beaver Creek drainage was granted to Havre as a county park – the largest county park in the United States. The Chippewa-Cree were given two townships of land, approximately 56,035 acres, in the “rougher and less valuable southern end of the [military] reserve.”¹⁷⁵ It was here that the Indians were to become self-supporting farmers.

The creation of the Rocky Boy Reservation served multiple interests. It was a government inspired solution to the state’s landless Indian problem by removing landless Indians from the outskirts of Montana’s white communities and relieving the “Indian Office and the Department considerable embarrassment” for failure to care for its wards.¹⁷⁶ For the few philanthropic supporters of the Chippewa and Cree, such as Frank B. Linderman, Charles M. Russell, and William Bole, it was the last hope for providing the Indians with a place that would “save them from suffering and starvation.”¹⁷⁷ These

aspirations, however, would be contradicted by the legal dictates that governed how the Indians would utilize the land.

As an Executive Order reservation, the Rocky Boy Reservation came under a “treaty substitute” system that the government devised in 1871 to modify the boundaries of Indian reservations as local situations demanded. The language governing executive order reservations was vague, often referring to the “use and/or occupancy” of land for “Indian purposes.”¹⁷⁸ The result of such non-specific language left Indian title to the land in a questionable state.

Instead of allotting the Rocky Boy Reservation, enrolled members were entitled to 80 to 160 acres through a revolving land assignment system. Under this system, Indian families were assigned to individual sections of land and required to improve it through agricultural development, fencing the property, and constructing houses. The revolving nature of land assignments involved a two-year review by the superintendent, who either approved or disapproved of the improvements made. If the superintendent did not find the family to be improving their assignment according to his expectations, they were removed from the assignment and another put in their place. This system provided the Indians no legal rights to the land or their improvements, and prevented them from passing the land on to their relatives.¹⁷⁹ The government policy that the Chippewa-Cree were to become farmers was unrealistic, as the land consisted of broken benches and coulees in the foothills of the Bear Paw Mountains.

The land assignment system at the Rocky Boy Reservation, which pushed farming as the main economic activity, was contradicted by land that was not conducive to

agriculture. As a result, several of the enrolled Rocky Boy people lost their assignments within the first ten years of the reservation's history. While the land was not conducive to large-scale agriculture, the expectation that the Indians would farm was implemented by force. For example, in 1926 Superintendent Luman Shotwell blamed the lack of the reservation's agricultural development on the unwillingness of the Indians to farm. According to Shotwell, the Rocky Boy Indians had become "the usual contumacious reservation Indian," and that it would take generations of superintendents to "instill in these Indians respect for the laws of the land."¹⁸⁰ In order to ensure that the Indians farmed, Shotwell implemented policies that required all individuals who received rations during the winter to sign a contract stating, "I hereby agree to use the above ration for farming my place...and to store grain in the Government grainary [sic] this fall to purchase rations and to put in my crop in 1927. I further agree that, should I use these rations and not farm my place, I accept sentence in the agency jail for a term of 30 days at hard labor."¹⁸¹ Even though the land at the Rocky Boy Reservation had always been classified as grazing land the Indian Office refused to recognize this reality. Instead, the civilizing policy of farming predominated reservation activities. In order to survive, the Rocky Boy Indians continued to rely upon their skills as migratory wage laborers and sought opportunities off the reservation.

5.1 Economy and Environment in the Twentieth Century

Farming and ranching activities in Montana have historically been at the mercy of the region's predominately semiarid climate, interspersed with brief periods of above-average precipitation. One such period occurred between 1909 and 1916, when an annual average of sixteen inches of precipitation accumulated primarily during the late spring and early summer months. This period of ample rainfall greatly enhanced agricultural production in areas of the state typically non-conducive to agricultural production. To the average outsider, Montana appeared to be a land of endless bounty. During this eight-year period, wheat harvests averaged twenty-five bushels to the acre. At the height of these productive years, recorded in history as the "miracle year of 1915," wheat harvests yielded over forty-two million bushels.¹⁸² The ample spring rainfall and resulting agricultural yields served as a propelling force in the settlement of Montana.

By 1917, the eight-year bounty came to an abrupt halt. A typical drought cycle extending from northern Montana to the south across the eastern two-thirds of the state ensued over the next few years. While in 1914 the state advertised free homesteads in an effort to boost settlement in the region, settlers were turned away in 1921 as a result of the state's dire economic conditions. Between 1917 and 1925, two million acres of Montana farmland went out of production. Roughly 11,000 farms were abandoned, 20,000 mortgages foreclosed, and one-half of all Montana farmers lost their land.¹⁸³ The latter part of the 1920s witnessed intermittent better times, but drought prevailed until the onset of the Great Depression in 1929. A combination of ecological reality and nationwide financial instability compelled half of the state's counties to file for Red Cross aid

by the summer of 1931. Especially hard hit were counties along the Montana Highline, whose main economy consisted of dry farming and raising livestock.¹⁸⁴ The prevailing conditions not only impacted Montana's white farmers and ranchers, but landless Indian people also experienced the full weight of ecological and economical hard times.

The extent of drought across the Montana Highline and along the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains caused farming and ranching activities to decline in these areas. As a result, seasonal employment on rural farms and ranches across the Montana Highline and along the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains declined. Similar to half of the state's non-Indian homesteaders, most Montana Metis abandoned their individual farms or lost their homesteads to foreclosure after 1919.¹⁸⁵ In other instances, the income Indians derived from leasing their land to white ranchers ceased as the latter became financially unable to pay. For example, many of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa and Metis who secured homesteads on land lying between the Rocky Boy Reservation and Great Falls in the 1920s became economically destitute when white ranchers who leased these lands became unable to pay their rent.¹⁸⁶

Between 1929 and 1932, the loss of lease income, homesteads, and seasonal employment opportunities on farms and ranches compelled landless Indian families to move from rural areas to urban centers for subsistence relief and employment. In the biography, *Fred Nault: Montana Metis*, Rocky Boy tribal member Fred Nault describes his life as youth working as a cowboy for large ranch outfits along the Front Range near the Montana towns of Dupuyer, Browning, Pendroy, and along the Canadian border at "Shoo-Cat" [Chouquette] Springs. As Nault illustrates, statewide drought and economic

depression brought about the decline of employment opportunities in these areas by 1929. This loss in employment forced Nault to move to Great Falls with his wife, Helen Lewis, and their two young children.¹⁸⁷ Author Rosalyn LaPier describes a similar experience among her relatives, who lived along the South Fork of the Sun River, at Ford Creek near Augusta, and along the Dearborn River. The primary livelihood in these communities was logging, selling firewood, and working at the various mills in these areas. At the time of the Depression, however, these families moved from the Augusta area to Hill 57.¹⁸⁸ It was during this time that landless Indian communities grew at the periphery of Montana's urban centers. While these areas became a source of short-term economic relief during the Depression, they also became areas of high resource competition.

Montana's urban centers economically relied upon the extraction and production of raw materials. As the economic depression curtailed national production in copper and lumber industries between 1929 and 1932, thousands of Montana's urban workers lost their jobs.¹⁸⁹ The financial crisis of the Great Depression, compounded with extensive drought, created high levels of resource competition in Montana's urban settings between thousands of now unemployed white and Indian people.¹⁹⁰ The dire economic situation that unfolded is illustrated by events that occurred in the city of Great Falls, Montana, in 1930.

Economically reliant upon mining and smelting activities, Cascade County was virtually broke by spring 1931 as a result of the extensive cutbacks in smelting activities. Bank closures, public looting, and hunger marches became regular events in the city of Great Falls.¹⁹¹ In an effort to ease the economic plight of citizens within the county, the

Cascade County Commissioner's office in Great Falls implemented emergency relief work programs that paid individual workers in food and clothing orders. Fred Nault came to Great Falls during this time, and worked for food orders as a member of the "Bean Gang" in downtown Great Falls on the Giant Springs Development project. According to Nault, the competition for relief work ran so high in the city that members of the Worker's Alliance armed themselves with "baseball bats, clubs, and pick handles to chase Indian workers off their jobs."¹⁹²

Montana counties were financially unable to provide for unemployed white citizens, and refused to cover costs incurred by Indian residents. Montana county commissioners plead to the state's governor and congressional representatives for financial assistance to relieve counties of the expenses incurred by the state's landless Indian population. In January 1932, five Montana counties demanded financial reimbursement from congress for the support of Landless Indians who had become "a socially and financially intolerable charge" upon the community and county where they resided.¹⁹³ County officials believed the financial burden of Landless Indians was a governmental responsibility, and that Indians living near white communities were legal wards of the government who "belonged on nearby Indian Reservations such as Rocky Boy and Fort Belknap."¹⁹⁴ Montana Senator Burton K. Wheeler responded to county requests, and drafted congressional bills for the "Care Of Indigent Indians" in behalf of Hill, Cascade, Choteau, Blaine, and Phillips counties to cover subsistence, hospitalization, medication, coal, housing, and burial expenses incurred by Landless Indians living in those counties since 1929.¹⁹⁵ None of Wheeler's bills passed Congress,

and, in light of the statewide economic crisis, Montana Governor Erickson advised the state legislature to slash appropriations and avoid new commitments.¹⁹⁶

Landless Indian families who moved from Montana's rural areas to urban centers for relief work experienced high levels of discrimination. White community members viewed Indian people as the mudsill of their communities, and held a general belief that all Indians were wards of the federal government and belonged on Indian reservations. The Office of Indian Affairs, however, viewed Montana's landless Indian population as "the more industrious Indians" who secured a place within Montana's white communities and had been absorbed into the general citizenry of the state. Following this logic, the Office of Indian Affairs believed non-ward Indians residing in various Montana counties were a local problem with local solutions.

In response to the demands coming from Montana, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Charles J. Rhoads argued that landless Indians in Montana should acquire citizen homesteads on the public domain through the 1862 Homestead Act, the 1887 General Allotment Act, and the Stock-raising Homestead Act of 1916. Any additional public services, such as health care and education, became the responsibility of the county in which the Indians resided.¹⁹⁷ According to the commissioner, enacting legislation to provide financial relief to "scattered non-ward Indians," or supporting legislation that financially reimbursed Montana counties for care of the same, re-acknowledged the government's financial and social responsibility to non-ward, landless Indians. The Office of Indian Affairs' underlying rationale for denying financial relief was because to

do so signified a “backward step in Indian administration,” which aimed to end the government’s financial obligation to Indian people.¹⁹⁸

5.2 Landless Indian Political Organizations, 1928-1934

Landless Indian political organizations in Montana formed in the early 1920s after the Rocky Boy Reservation was created by executive order in 1916. This faction reorganized politically, emphasizing existing community ties as well as the formation of new ones between landless Indian groups.

Between 1927 and 1929, Joseph Dussome of Zurich, Montana, lead a group of Landless Indians under the various titles of “Abandoned Tribe of Indians of Montana,” the “Lost Chippewa,” the “Landless Indians of Northern Montana,” or as the “Landless Indians of Montana” (LIM). This organization served to represent the political and social interests of Landless Indians in the state. Initially, Joe Dussome disputed that the LIM had any affiliation with the Turtle Mountain Chippewa. Rather, Dussome asserted group ancestry among the Pembina band of Chippewa under the leadership of Chief Red Bear.¹⁹⁹ Later, however, Dussome began to represent individuals claiming descendency under the leadership of Pembina Chief Thomas Little Shell, a descendent of Chief Little Shell of the Turtle Mountain band originally from North Dakota. Contemporary research illustrates the confusion surrounding Dussome’s group and their exact ethnic affiliation. Great effort has been undertaken to genetically pinpoint the descendency of this group. This is nearly impossible to do if we consider the multi-ethnic composition of landless Indian people in Montana, and the numerous avenues for identification this multi-ethnic composition creates.

In 1929, Dussome wrote to attorney A.A. Grorud in behalf of the “abandoned Tribe of Indians of Montana,” requesting Grorud’s assistance in securing title to land in Montana for his group. Dussome argued that the Landless Indians of Montana (LIM) retained title and rights to land in Montana through possession and occupancy, citing Turtle Mountain Indians under the leadership of Chief Little Shell who took allotments of land in eastern Montana as provided by the provisions of the 1887 General Allotment Act. This act provided land for Indian people who had not previously received rights to a reservation, or for Indians who were enrolled members of a reservation but were unable to settle on their reservation due to a lack of sufficient land.

Several Turtle Mountain Indians took public domain allotments in Montana under the terms of the 1887 act, only to have their allotments rejected by the General Land Office on the basis that they were Indian. In other cases, individual allotments were rejected by the Indian Office on the basis that Indian allottees could not be established as a recognized member of a tribe, specifically the Turtle Mountain Indians of North Dakota. Dussome argued that rights to land were stated in the section of the General Allotment Act providing allotments for Indian people on the public domain in North Dakota and Montana, and “tribal affiliation” was not a provision of the act. Therefore, Indian families who elected to take homesteads on the public domain under the 1887 Act did not dissolve their cultural affiliation as Indian people.²⁰⁰

Chapter 6

Conclusions

Contemporary studies of Metis social and cultural history draw upon the work of anthropologist Fredrik Barth to describe the ethnic dynamism of Metis identity.²⁰¹ The utility of Barth's theories in Metis studies stem from his ethnic focus as opposed to a cultural focus, which shifts analysis to specific cultural elements that define specific ethnic boundaries. Furthermore, Barth emphasizes the relevance of ascription in an attempt to understand who is and is not a member within a particular ethnic group.²⁰² This aspect is of particular interest to understanding the ethnic identity of the Metis, Cree and Chippewa in Montana.

In the introduction to the anthology *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Frederick Barth outlines his relational theory of ethnicity that focuses upon the negotiation of social boundaries between ethnic groups. One aspect of this work is Barth's discussion on the social category of "pariah groups." The term *pariah* originates from the caste system of India, but has gained widespread use in contemporary times as an analogy, especially in the phrase "social pariah," to describe anyone who is considered to be an outcast according to the standards of others.²⁰³

According to Barth, pariah groups consist of individuals who have been rejected by the host population, or parental group, because of a socially condemned behavior or characteristic, despite their usefulness in "some specific, practical way." This social disability, as perceived by cultural outsiders, prevents any consideration of the pariah group or its members as a full-fledged ethnic group. Because the pariah group is

considered by cultural others to lack complexity, the excluding host population maintains the social boundaries.²⁰⁴ Barth's criteria for pariah group identification are useful here in illustrating the ideological basis of the externally ascribed identity of landless Indians in Montana.

Landless Indians in Montana have been characterized historically by landlessness, mixed-bloodedness, and an ascribed status as Canadian refugees or foreigners. These characteristics comprise the "inescapable destiny" Barth refers to, and were condemned attributions according to the standards of cultural outsiders. Landless Indians did not fit neatly into dominant notions of exclusive tribal populations with exclusive membership on federally designated Indian reservations. The presence of multiethnic Indians complicated the dominant society's myopic view of Indian and white. Furthermore, white citizens condemned the "roving" behavior of landless Indians, and considered them to be a class of "wandering Indian gypsies" or "vagabonds" despite their usefulness to Montana's economy as migratory wage laborers – a practical economic niche that required seasonal mobility across a wide geographic area of urban and rural economic opportunity.

The formation and persistence of landless Indian communities further illustrates the maintenance of social boundaries between cultural others and landless Metis, Cree and Chippewa. Cultural outsiders perceived landless Indian communities as a manifestation of the "irreconcilable" and "renegade" nature inherent in Indianness. Cultural outsiders did not understand the circumstances landless Indians faced, such as reservation underdevelopment or the dispossession of Indian land. Rather, white

communities condemned the presence of landless Indian communities as a deficiency on part of the Indians and a lack of guardianship by the federal government.

As we can see in the case of Metis, Cree and Chippewa, ethnic ascription exaggerates cultural and social difference, fosters discrimination, and perpetuates the maintenance of rigid social boundaries. The ascription of an identity as “Canadian foreigners” contributed to the social, economic, and geographic polarization of Metis, Cree and Chippewa people and their communities from federally recognized Indian tribes and emerging white communities in Montana. Due to a lack of knowledge and understanding concerning the unique history of the Metis, Cree, and Chippewa people in Montana, cultural outsiders assumed landless Indians represented the stragglers of a once cohesive tribal nation whose irreconcilable differences contributed to their own social disenfranchisement and disintegration. As a result of this perception, cultural outsiders never considered landless Metis, Cree, and Chippewa in Montana a bona fide ethnic group; therefore, their role in the social, cultural, and economic life of Montana’s Indian and non-Indian communities went unacknowledged.

The social boundaries of Metis, Cree and Chippewa were maintained largely by cultural others in the excluding population. These social boundaries are integral to the process of ethnogenesis among Metis, Cree and Chippewa in Montana. According to author Jonathan Hill, “Ethnogenetic processes are intrinsically dynamic and rooted in a people’s sense of historical consciousness, or ‘a reflexive awareness on the part of social actors of their ability to make situational and more lasting adjustments to social orderings...and an ability to understand that ordering as it is situated in larger, more

encompassing spatiotemporal orders that include others who are socially different.”²⁰⁵

The shared experiences among disparate ethnic groups create a social group whose shared understanding of these historical experiences distinguishes them from cultural others. Therefore, through a shared historical experience and mutual understanding of that experience, the Metis, Cree and Chippewa people of Montana emerged as a unique group known generally as Montana’s Landless Indians.

6.1 Ethnogenesis

In the introduction to this paper, the work of Susan R. Sharrock was addressed as having made seminal contributions to our knowledge of the various transformative processes that led to the emergence of a distinct Cree-Assiniboine ethnic identity. One distinguishing aspect of Sharrock’s work is her illustration of the merger patterns of social fusion and cooperation as an instrumental aspect of ethnogenesis. Merger involves a process whereby different ethnic groups accommodate the presence of each other through the mutual use of a shared land base and its resources, and cooperation in subsistence, ceremonial, and military activities.²⁰⁶ The social utility of merger is that it serves to reduce social difference and conflict between discrete ethnic groups, thus enabling them to utilize and occupy each other’s respective territories.²⁰⁷ This specific contribution has been acknowledged by anthropologist Patricia C. Albers, who expanded upon Sharrock’s work to illuminate the various transformative processes involved in interethnic merger among the Plains Assiniboine, Cree, and Ojibwa.

In her essay, “Changing Patterns of Ethnicity in the Northeastern Plains, 1780-1870,” Albers examines the regional variation and changing historical circumstances that

effected ethnic hybridization among Plains Assiniboiné, Cree and Ojibwa.²⁰⁸ In order to illustrate the various stages of ethnogenesis among these groups, Albers developed a four-stage continuum of cultural interaction and change that leads to ethnogenesis.

According to Albers, one end of the ethnogenetic continuum is represented by the existence of a “polyethnic alliance formation.” The formation of a polyethnic alliance occurs when discrete ethnic groups utilize a common resource area through mutual cooperation in social, political, religious, and subsistence activities. At this stage of ethnogenesis the alliance acts to reduce tension and conflict between groups, but it exists as a loosely bounded situation whereby each ethnic group maintains their respective residential and ethnic distinctiveness. This stage of ethnogenesis is aptly discussed in current literature concerning the Plains Cree and Assiniboiné, illustrating that merger patterns evident among these groups during the late seventeenth and mid-eighteenth centuries promoted strong polyethnic alliance formations.²⁰⁹ During this time, the Plains Cree and Assiniboiné coalition utilized a shared subsistence pattern that was co-occupied across an expansive and diverse ecological territory, in which both of these ethnic groups participated jointly as trade middlemen and as military allies.²¹⁰ By the late eighteenth century, the persistence and intensification of coresidency, cooperation in trade and military activities, and intermarriage among some groups of Plains Cree and Assiniboiné resulted in new merger patterns.

A cumulative, time-honored system of coresidency and intermarriage between disparate ethnic groups brings about two new distinct, but overlapping merger patterns. Albers defines these patterns as the “ethnic bloc confederation” and the “hybridized

group coalition.”²¹¹ According to Albers, the ethnic bloc confederation occurs when a politically or demographically dominant ethnic group “absorb[s] foreign ethnicities into their ranks,” but each respective group continues to maintain their separate ethnic identities. Another form of the ethnic bloc confederation occurs when members of contiguous ethnic groups that are equal size and political power interact to the degree that a bicultural heritage emerges, yet political and ethnic affiliation with one or the other parental groups is maintained.²¹²

Overlapping the ethnic block confederation is the hybridized group coalition, which occurs when intermarriage and coresidency among separate ethnic groups results in a sociopolitical entity that stands apart from either parental blocs. While both political and ethnic identity merge in this case, certain cultural aspects such as language are retained “as a sort of umbilical connection” to either one or both parental blocs.²¹³ This stage of Albers’ continuum is equivalent to Susan Sharrock’s concept of “fused ethnicity,” but does not represent ethnogenesis in its complete form.²¹⁴

Ethnogenesis arrives in a complete form at the other end of the continuum. Albers defines this stage the “emergent ethnic community,” which is characterized by disparate ethnic groups who become culturally and socially indistinguishable from one another. According to Albers “they not only form a political entity that is separate from their parent populations, but they also assume an ethnic identification that is distinctive as well. It is an identity that emphasizes unity and solidarity over any differences from their ethnic pasts.”²¹⁵

As Albers illustrates in her article, the merger patterns of Assiniboiné, Cree, and Ojibwa groups across the plains were in continual flux between 1780 and 1870. Between 1840 and 1860 the Cypress Hills area became the site of a cultural milieu as the Cree, Assiniboiné and Ojibwa from the North Branch of the Saskatchewan extended their territory south to overlap with bands of Cree-Assiniboiné and Downriver Cree. Between 1840 and 1870 merger patterns became more complex, and local bands became more ethnically diverse. Through an expansion of territory, a diversification of economic livelihoods, and an extension of social ties, the ethnically diverse bands of Cree, Assiniboiné, and Ojibwa were able to adapt to rapid political, economic, and social change. As these hybridized groups coalesced in southern Saskatchewan and northern Montana, this borderland region became “a haven and melting pot for a wide variety of native ethnic groups in search of a livelihood and independence.”²¹⁶ The lack of enforcement along the international border and a relatively low level of white settlement in this area between 1840 and 1870 enabled hybridized bands of Plains Assiniboiné, Cree and Ojibwa to flourish. As the border region became more populated and highly politicized between 1870 and 1890, patterns of merger and ethnic identification among diverse groups became more complex as these groups reorganized.

The various bands of Métis, Cree and Chippewa who resided primarily in Montana throughout the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries consisted of diverse ethnic lines of Métis, Cree, Chippewa/Ojibwa, and Assiniboiné, in addition to Gros Ventre, Blackfeet, or Crow. As these multiethnic groups coalesced in a new geographical

setting, they formed new polyethnic alliances through their utilization of a shared resource area and cooperation in social, political, religious, and subsistence activities.

According to Albers, Chief Little Shell's band of Metis-Chippewa represented a newly emergent ethnic community by the mid-1800s. This band became distinguished socially and politically from their Ojibwa (Bungi) relatives living north of the Turtle Mountains. According to Albers, the Little Shell group represents a portion of the combined Assiniboine, Cree and Ojibwa people who lived west of the Turtle Mountains. It was in this region where demographic and economic changes among Assiniboine, Cree and Ojibwa between 1820 and 1840 resulted in the emergence of a distinct ethnic community apart from their eastern counterparts.²¹⁷ The socio-political distinctiveness of Little Shell's band is further illustrated by Little Shell's intermittent residence among his relatives in the Fort Peck area of Montana, such as Red Stone, his maternal uncle, and the Cree-Assiniboine Broken Arm.²¹⁸ These kin relationships explain Little Shell's actions during land claim negotiations between the Turtle Mountain Chippewa and the federal government in 1891, when Little Shell requested a twenty township tract of land near the mouth of the Milk River in Montana in exchange for a larger reservation in the Turtle Mountain area.²¹⁹

Anthropologists Franklin and Bunte also suggest that the Montana Metis, or Little Shell, began emerging as a distinct and independent social and political entity by the late 1870s, and continued a process of political transition between 1879 and 1927 that resulted in their distinction from the Turtle Mountain and Pembina communities.²²⁰ In 1879, Louis Riel, who was a resident of Montana at that time, became politically active in

organizing efforts to establish a reservation for the landless Metis and Indian people in the state. While Riel would leave Montana for Canada in spring 1884 and never return, his charisma as a leader and initiative to organize landless Metis and Indian people in Montana continued. By 1927, the Little Shell formally organized as a distinct political body, initially known as the “Abandoned Tribe of Indians of Montana.” The identification of the Little Shell band as an emergent ethnic community in the late 1800s implies their position as players in the polyethnic alliances to follow, and provides a juncture for considering the continual processes of ethnogenesis this group would undergo as a result of their interaction with other distinct groups of Metis, Cree and Chippewa in Montana.

One of the distinct groups that emerged in Montana in the late nineteenth century is Little Bear and his band of Cree Indians. The available documentary evidence tells us that Little Bear was first reported at Fort Benton, Montana Territory, in 1885. Whites believed Little Bear and his band came to Montana directly as a result of the Riel Rebellion. While this observation is not wholly incorrect, it fails to acknowledge that Little Bear retreated into a territory with which he was intimately familiar through his father, Big Bear. As discussed earlier, Big Bear’s band and Louis Riel hunted and traded at the Carroll Post along the Milk and Missouri Rivers of northern Montana between 1880 until 1882. Between 1885 and 1900, Little Bear’s band and various Metis groups coexisted in various settings and situations throughout Montana. By the turn of the century, Rocky Boy and his band would emerge as an integral component of Montana’s landless Indian population.

The origins of Rocky Boy are difficult to ascertain. Some sources suggest that Rocky Boy was originally part of an eastern-based Chippewa/Ojibwa group that migrated from the Wisconsin area to the Turtle Mountains of North Dakota, and perhaps accompanied Little Shell's band into Montana sometime between 1885 and 1893.²²¹ One contrasting case for Rocky Boy's origins occurred in 1908, when Rocky Boy told U.S. Indian Inspector Frank C. Churchill that he was "a Chippewa Indian and that he was born at Silver Bow," a general term for the area around the present-day communities of Butte, Anaconda and Deer Lodge.²²² While Rocky Boy's origin is ambiguous, outside perceptions of Rocky Boy's band illustrate that this group was hybridized in nature. Additional evidence also suggest that Rocky Boy's group co-existed alongside Little Bear's band and other small communities of Metis, Cree and Chippewa in Montana.

The earliest account of Rocky Boys band occurred in 1902, when Flathead Agent William H. Smead discovered Rocky Boy's band living near Anaconda, Montana, with a large group of Indians Smead identified as "Canadian born Crees."²²³ In 1908, Indian Inspector Frank Churchill identified Rocky Boy's band as belonging to "the roving Indian group" in Montana, which also included Little Bear and his band of fifty persons and numerous other Indian groups living in the state. According to Churchill this landless Indian group lived throughout Montana in smaller groups, and while they had intermarried to a considerable extent they "knew very little about each other and the relationship existing between families."²²⁴ This observation implies that these groups maintained a high level of social and geographical distinctiveness; however, rather than suggesting that the Indians lacked knowledge of each other, this observation could

signify an effort among the various groups to conceal their interrelationship and/or Cree heritage from outsiders to avoid being deported to Canada or denied rights in the United States based upon a stigmatized “Canadian” Cree heritage.

There are various opinions as to when the Rocky Boy and Little Bear bands came together as a collective group. Rocky Boy tribal member Fred Nault tells us that the two groups did not unify as a single group until 1914, when they received government permission to camp in the southern portion of the former Fort Assiniboine military reservation prior to the creation of the Rocky Boy Reservation.²²⁵ James Dempsey believes that the two bands formed a political alliance in 1909 when they were living at the Blackfeet Reservation.²²⁶ Evidence for an earlier merger of these two groups is proposed by historian Larry Burt, who suggests that Little Bear and Rocky Boy’s bands “formed a lasting alliance in 1905” when both bands were camped in separate locations near Helena.²²⁷ All of these opinions suggest that a need for land and a legal identity was the primary motivating factor in their unification. Other information, however, provides evidence that the relationship between Rocky Boy and Little Bear was based upon marital ties, which suggests that the relationship between these two men ran deeper than just a mutual need for land and a legal identity.²²⁸ Unfortunately, a lack of evidence prevents a clear illustration of the extent of influence this marital tie had in the relationship between these two men. What is evident, however, is that outside ascription appears to have largely influenced merger patterns of these two groups.

The outside observations of Montana Metis, Cree and Chippewa illustrate that government officials recognized them as hybridized “band” level groups that maintained

geographical and social distinctiveness across Montana, yet they were considered a collective entity based upon their position as non-status, landless Indians. While their Indian ethnicity distinguished them from whites, their landlessness distinguished them from federally recognized Indian people. Based upon this information, Rocky Boy and Little Bear bands represented a cluster of social networks that were involved in a polyethnic alliance between 1900 and 1910. The effort to acquire permanent land between 1911 and 1913 changed merger patterns between these groups.

The effort to acquire land for the Rocky Boy Chippewa in Montana in 1909 resulted in the placement of roughly 100 families on 80-acre tentative allotments at the Blackfeet Reservation. While Little Bear and a portion of his band camped near Cut Bank, Montana, in anticipation of being allotted along with the Rocky Boy group, the two groups maintained residential and social distinctiveness. The tentative, isolated and small tracts of land in northwestern Montana provided the Rocky Boy allottees with neither security nor chance for survival. Little Bear and his band were denied allotment because they were considered Canadian Cree and were not listed on Rocky Boy's original 1908 census. As a result of prevailing social and economic tensions, Rocky Boy and Little Bear bands left the Blackfeet Reservation to reside near Montana's towns, and continued to push the government for their own land apart from existing reservations.

Between 1905 and 1911, evidence suggests that the Rocky Boy and Little Bear bands continued to co-exist in a polyethnic alliance formation. While these two groups were increasingly drawn together by their landlessness, both groups continued to maintain socio-political distinctiveness. This is illustrated by the fact that, on four

separate occasions between 1905 and 1911, Little Bear continued to requested permission from the Indian Department in Ottawa to temporarily settle at the Onion Lake Reserve with his band until a new reserve could be permanently established for them.²²⁹ While the Indian Department in Canada agreed to allow Little Bear's band to return, Little Bear did not agree to the conditions under which the Indians were to return. As a result, Little Bear pushed to acquire land in Montana with Rocky Boy's band. By 1914, the potential to secure land at the abandoned Fort Assiniboine Military Reserve in north central Montana effected changes in merger patterns and ethnic affiliation among these local groups.

In 1913, Little Bear and Rocky Boy bands exhibit elements of a hybridized group coalition. In September of this year, Special Agent James W. Neal investigated reports of a large group of Indians camped near the Bear Paw Mountains along Beaver Creek on the abandoned Fort Assiniboine Military reserve lands. According to Neal, the Indians in the camp were "principally Crees and Chippewas, and corsses [sic] between these tribes and the Assiniboine, Gros Ventres and other tribes and that they recognized Little Bear of the Crees and Rocky Boy of the Chippewas as their Chiefs."²³⁰ In 1914, Little Bear vocalized his allegiance to the Rocky Boy Chippewa by asserting his identity as a sub-chief of Rocky Boy's band.²³¹ Little Bear's affiliation with the Rocky Boy group was politically and socially advantageous because the United States recognized the Chippewa as an American Indian people. This fact granted Rocky Boy social and political leverage in his attempts to acquire land and federal recognition. The merger pattern between these two groups at this time reflects an ethnic bloc confederation, where the politically

dominant Rocky Boy group absorbed Little Bear and his band in a mutual effort to acquire land and recognition, yet both of these groups continued to maintain their respective identities as separate bands.

In 1916, the Rocky Boy Reservation was created by executive order for the settlement of the “Chippewa-Cree and Other Homeless Indians in the State of Montana.” The ascription of a hyphenated ethnic identity as Chippewa-Cree acknowledges the longstanding interrelationship between these two groups and signifies that their ethnic diversity made them indistinguishable to cultural outsiders. However, a new ethnic community did not emerge at the inception of the Rocky Boy Reservation. Rather, the creation of the reservation is a single historical event that brought more social and political changes to the landless Indian population.

The first five years on the reservation brought numerous social and political changes to the enrolled Chippewa-Cree. The death of Rocky Boy in 1916, followed by the death of Little Bear in 1921, resulted in a loss of leadership and direction. The establishment of the reservation created a formal relationship between the Chippewa-Cree and the United States government and the emergence of new authority that would govern the social, economic and political life of enrolled Rocky Boy members. Because most the reservation’s population could not survive on the land they continued to rely upon their skills as migratory wage laborers to survive.

The creation of the Rocky Boy Reservation also meant the exclusion of other landless Metis, Cree and Chippewa people, and in some cases was a division that cut

across family lines. The landless Indians who were excluded from the Rocky Boy Reservation reorganized politically and socially. This is illustrated by the formation of the political organization known as the Landless Indians of Montana, which emerged in 1927. This political group transformed over the years, and is today known as the Little Shell Tribe.

Throughout the history of Montana's Metis, Cree and Chippewa people, known as the Landless Indians of Montana, the overlapping merger patterns at the middle of the continuum are most prominent. The development of a distinct emergent ethnic community at the Rocky Boy Reservation did not occur at the moment the reservation was created in 1916. This transformation took place over the course of a generation or more before an emergent ethnic community could be clearly identified. Similarly the history of the Little Shell Chippewa/Metis exemplifies the reorganization and coalescence of dynamic ethnic groups that were brought together through a shared history of landlessness. The creation of the Rocky Boy Reservation did not bring an end to the state's "landless Indian problem," but marks a period of transition in the history of Montana's landless Indians. As Montana entered the Depression era, the Landless Indians of Montana would emerge as a unique landless Indian population apart from the Indians living at the Rocky Boy Reservation.

Appendix A:

The Census of the Canadian Indians that are affiliated with Rocky Boy's Indians of Montana, compiled by Thralls W. Wheat, Clerk, Allotting Service

April 8-14, 1909

Note: 1-17 represents Indians who Thralls Wheat believed “belonged in Canada.”

The notes of Thralls Wheat appear in () parenthesis. Wheat recorded the location of individual family heads by listing the location after their English name, and denoted a (“) after the names of additional family members, meaning “same as above” or “dido.”

My notes appear in [] brackets.

Wheat grouped families together by leaving a blank row between them. In a couple of instances, individuals have been listed singly.

Number	Indian Name	English Name	Sex	Relation	Age
1		Young Boy (at Cutbank)	M	Husband	36
2		Chippewa Woman (“)	F	Mother	80
3		Big Hair (“)	F	Wife	
4	Chee-poo-ski-ses		F	1 st wife of Pennato	30
5	Os-cha-sey-mas	Old Boy (at Crow)	M	Husband	36
6	Mis-am-as-te-quan	Hard Head (“)	F	Wife	23
7	Pes-e-mo-sis	Little Sun (“)	M	Son	8
8	Kim-o-won-pey-a-sis	Raining Bird	M	Son	2
9		Otter-in-his-hand	M	Husband	60
10	Pin-nask-chao	Lying-down-lower	F	Mother	
11		Joe Dinnie	M	Brother	27
12	Nook-e-ach	Mary Dinnie	F	Sister	18
13		James Dinnie	M	Brother	16

14		Pete Dinnie	M	Brother	8
15		Sam Dinnie	M	Brother	17
16		Standing Rock (note: said by Rocky Boy to be a Chippewa)	M	Widower	
17	Nan-oos	Rosie Dinnie Bird	F	Wife	
1	We-ap-i-oo	Baptiste Samate (at Flathead)	M	Widower	40
2		Blackfoot Woman (at Cutbank)	F	Mother (1)	87
3	Coo-pi-qui-a-no	Had-a-whistle (here) [refers to Helena]	M	Son (1)	27
4	Chipow	(at Cutbank)	F	Daughter (1)	4
5	Os-che-neen		F	Sister (2)	50
6		Man Child (at Cutbank)	M	Bro (2&5)	54
7		Sitting Horse (at Flathead)	M	Hus.	54
8	E-qua-sis	Little Girl	F	Wife	20
9	As-I-ne-we-in	Rocky Boy (here) [Helena]	M	Hus.	56
10	Pe-chee-too	(here) [Helena]	F	Wife	57
11	Tat-ack-api-e-tak	Charles Rocky Boy (here) [Helena]	M	Ad.S.	22
12	Kak-i-mow-an-oko- chick	Hanging-in-rain (here) [Helena]	F	Gr.D. (Dau. 133)	4
13		Smooth-eyes (at Cut	F	Wife	30

		Bank)			
14		Man-for-nothing (Cutbank)	M	Hus.	47
15	Ne-me-cath	Front-sky-woman (“)	F	Wife	21
16	Es-com-cup	(“)	F	Mother (15)	75
17		Joe Small (Crow Res.)	M	Hus.	27
18	E-qua-sis	Little Girl (“)	F	Wife	20
19	Wap-mon	Daylight (“)	M	Son	3
20		Johnson Small (“)	F	Son	
21	Cam-i-yach-ap-pio	Pete Fine-bow (Crow Res.)	M	Hus.	28
22	Not-cho-qui-sis	Sophia Fine-bow (“)	F	Wife	23
23	Omas-enahe-caw-pi-ye- sis	Riding (writing) bird (“)	M	Son	3
24		Big-weasel (“)	M	Son	4 mo.
25	Wash-a-os	Walking-stone (in jail at Deer Lodge)	M	Hus.	60 (57)
26	Mask-co-cash-e-we-qua	Bear-claw-woman (at Cutbank)	F	Dau	10
27	Jap-ay-twa-we-tack	Hollering-around (“)	M	Son	7
28	Cami-chay-tac-o-pao	Many Blankets (“)	M	Son	5
29	Kis-e-kaw-es-quao	Earth Blanket (“)	F	Dau	2
30	Pan-na-do	(at Logan)	M	Husband	40
31	On-ki-maw-ap-i-we-yin	Chief-sitting (“)	M	Son	9
32	Kap-I-wap-es-co-qui-as	Iron-maker (“)	M	Son	7

33	Kak-a-pes-em-os-quao	All-day-woman (“)	F	Dau	3
34	Nap-a-ysis	Poor-child (“)	F	Dau.	1
35		Annie Smith (“)	F	Wife #2	16
36		Moses Smith (Logan – killed by train 8/16/09)	M	Husband	29
37		Mary Smith (Logan – St. Ignatius School)	F	Sister	13
38		Nancy Smith (“)	F	Wife	26
39		Patrick Smith (“)	M	Son	8
40		Jessie Smith (“)	F	Dau.	3
41		Rosie Smith (“)	F	Dau	3
42		Paul Smith (at DeSmet, Idaho)	M	Father (36)	56
43	Tat-a-ce-we-kim-os	Gabriel Smith (at Flathead)	M	Husband	38
44	Kok-im-aw-ak-op-ic	Chief Blanket (“)	F	Wife	32
45	Cask-ich-aw-as-ey-nio	Betsey Smith (“)	F	Dau	14
46	Ta-pec	Maggie Smith (“)	F	Dau	5
47	Ap-on-ask	Roast Stick Michael (at Garrison)	M	Husband	34
48	Co-qui-sis	Eliza Michael (“)	F	Wife	33
49		Simon Michael (“)	M	Son	9
50		Julia Michael (“)	F	Dau	3
51	Am-op-ey-a-sis	Humming Bird (“)	M	Son	1
52	Kap-a-too-co-es-ki-sin	Jim Happy (at Garrison)	M	Husband	24
53	Cami-yas-kam-ka-pia	Fine-sitting-on-ground (baby born 8/3/09 – girl)	F (F)	Wife	32

54	As-qua-tau	(at Cutbank)	M	Widower	40
55	Chee-man-ash-cach	Stump (at Crow Res)	M	Son	22
56	E-qua-sis	Little Girl (Crow Res)	F	Gr. Wid.	20
57	Ochee-pois-quao	Fine Sun (“)	F	Dau	2
58	Nap-ay-sis	Crow Boy (“)	M	Son	
59	Cash-kit-aw-et-ay-anie	Black Tongue (at Anaconda)	M	Husband	56
60	Es-qua-sis or We-nipe	(“)	F	Wife	50
61	Chan-na	(“)	M	Son	7
62	Pask-aw-ay-ow-es	Breaking-egg (“)	F	Son	4
63	Can-as-pe-tow-i-tack	Hollering-always (“)	M	Son	14
64	Na-hee-no-case	Sadie Black Tongue (at Fort Shaw school)	F	Dau	17
65		Mosquito (at Anaconda)	M	Son	6 mo
66	Kappa-chaw-ays	Coming Sound (at Flathead)	M	Husband	24
67	Es-qua-i-na	Betsey Coming Sound (“)	F	Wife	18
68	Tap-ik-apa-we-we-yin	John Kennedy (at Flathead)	M	Husband	57
69	Kap-i-wap-eski-nam	Marie Kennedy (“)	F	Wife	54
70	Mes-ach-kis	Johnnie (or Baptiste) Kennedy (at Garrison)	M	Son	26
71	Oma-theis	Edward Kennedy (“)	M	Son	18
72	Es-kan-na	Alex Kennedy (“)	M	Son	16

73	Non-na	Nancy Kennedy (at Flathead)	F	Dau.	15
74	Pec-quick	Bessie Kennedy (“)	F	Dau	10
75	Ota-poo-wes-quin	Margaret (Marice) Kennedy (at Garrison)	F	Dau (69)	4
76	Achee-samach	Jack-fish (at Fish Lake, Can.)	M	Son (69)	6
77	Tan-ash	Louis Kennedy (at Fish Lake, Can)	M	Son (67)	23
78	Wab-ash-o-sis	Joe Little Pine (at Crow Res)	M	Husband	30
79	Kam-asko-kop-ay-wisk	Bear Blanket (“)	F	Wife	34
80	Na-tru??	Get-him (in Billings)	M	Father (78)	60
81	Ona-kaw-ao (O-nak-a-wao)	Chippewa Woman (at Cut Bank)	F	Widow	50
82		Shake Wind (at Garrison)	M	Son	32
83		Side Rock	M		
84	Kok-shu-wa-ko-che	(at Flathead)	M	Son	12
85	Ka-mis-ho-na-ha-pro	Sitting Bear (at Garrison)	F	Dau	13
86	E-qua-sis	Little Girl	F	Dau	2
87	Naw-a-quia-kis-ey-kok	Noon-skies	F	Widow	40
88	Och-e-chak	Crane	M	Son	11
89	Man-i-tou Cas-cwes-quao	Holy Day Woman	4	Dau	6
90	Kasey-way-as-ewe-yin	Wind Sounding	M	Son	13
91		Jim Richards (at Havre)	M	Gr. Widr.	58

92	Na-wa-ka-mi-ka-pik	Sitting in Middle of Ground (at Flathead)	M	Husband	40
93	Wap-mon	Looking-glass (“)	F	Wife	31
94	Cap-ay-twa-we-tack	Hollering-around (“)	M	Son	11
95	Pay-to-wa-com-apy	Coming-sound-feathers(“)	F	Dau	17
96		Walk-in-day-time (“)	F	Dau	5
97	E-qua-sis	Little Girl (“)	F	Dau	2
98	Nay-mes-ak-am-i-kok	(here) [Helena]	F	Widow (1/2 sister of 9)	43
99		Round Sky (at Flathead)	M	Husband	35
100	Wap-a-sows	Light Hair (“)	F	Wife	36
101		Coming-with-the-wind (“)	F	Dau	11
102		Wind-man (“)	M	Son	9
103		Cock-eyes (“)	M	Son	16
104	Os-ha-we-pe-nes	Yellow Bird (in Anaconda)	M	Husband	20
105		Joe Mitchell	M	Father	40
106	Can-da-wo-can-chi	Leonide Guardipee (in Anaconda)	M	Husband	60
107	Cak-ik-ay-awee-quia	Going-by-the-wind (“)	F	Wife	56
108	Cat-chi-case	James Guardipee (“)	M	Son	20
109		Chirstine Guardipee (“) (widow of Side Rock)	F	Dau	17
110	Mess-app	Helen Guardipee (“)	F	Dau	14

Appendix B:

List of Chippewa-Cree allotted on the Blackfeet Reservation, 1910 and 1911

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Henry Papin | 33. Mary Standingrock | 69. Alfred Morrisette |
| 2. Turnborn Papin | 34. Daylightstar Samate | 70. John Pellitier |
| 3. Rosie Papin | 35. Joe Mitchell | 71. Louis Lafromboise |
| 4. Margaret Papin | 36. Nancy Mitchell | 72. Crane |
| 5. Beatrice Papin | 37. Liza Mitchell | 73. Holyday Woman |
| 6. William Cameron | 38. Henry Mitchell | 74. Wind Sounding |
| 7. James Richards | 39. Mollie Mitchell | 75. Man-for-nothing |
| 8. Rocky Boy | 40. Sophia Mitchell | 76. Front-sky-woman |
| 9. Peecheetoo Rocky Boy | 41. Maggie Mitchell | 77. Es-com-up |
| 10. Charles Rocky Boy | 42. Peter Mitchell | 78. Peter Cardinelle |
| 11. Nay-mes-ak-am-i-kok | 43. George Mitchell | 79. Nelson Cardinelle |
| 12. Hanginrain | 44. Paul Smith | 80. Bernard Cardinelle |
| 13. Baptiste Samate | 45. Annie Smith | 81. Maggie Mosney |
| 14. Blackfootwoman Samate | 46. Mary Smith | 82. Charles Mosney |
| 15. Hadawhistle Samate | 47. Nancy Smith | 83. John Mosney |
| 16. Chipow Samate | 48. Patrick Smith | 84. Louis Mosney |
| 17. Os-che-neen | 49. Jessie Smith | 85. Sophia Finebow |
| 18. Manchild | 50. Rosie Smith | 86. Writingbird Finebow |
| 19. Leonide Guardipee | 51. William McGills | 87. Bigweasel Finebow |
| 20. Going-by-the-wind Guardipee | 52. Isabelle McGills | 88. Asquato |
| 21. James Guardipee | 53. Eliza McGills | 89. Stump |
| 22. Louis Guardipee | 54. John McGills | 90. Littlegirl |
| 23. Helen Guardipee | 55. Se-ten McGills | 91. Fine sun |
| 24. Charles Guardipee | 56. Joseph McGills | 92. Crowboy |
| 25. Peter Guardipee | 57. Joseph Goin | 93. Peter Berland |
| 26. Amerial Guardipee | 58. John Morisette #1 | 94. Mary Berland |
| 27. Cecile Guardipee | 59. Philimena Morrisette | 95. Robert Allen |
| 28. Christine Mosney | 60. George Morrisette | 96. Henry Allen |
| 29. Sarah Siderock | 61. Josephine Morrisette | 97. Alex Wells |
| 30. Yellowbird | 62. Eliza Morrisette | 98. Mary Wells #1 |
| 31. Adelle Yellowbird | 63. Joseph Morrisette | 99. Walter Wells |
| 32. Josephine Yellowbird | 64. John Morrisette #2 | 100. Mary Wells #2 |
| | 65. Louise Morrisette | 101. Lawrence Wells |
| | 66. Mary Morrisette | |
| | 67. Louis Morrisette | |
| | 68. William Morrisette | |

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- ¹⁷⁵ U.S. Statues at Large, 63rd Congress, 3rd Session, vol. 38, part 1, 1913-1915 (Government Printing Office, Washington 1915) pp. 807-809; Department of the Interior, Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, June 30, 1915, (Government Printing Office, Washington 1916) p. 36. The Thirteenth Legislative Assembly of Montana granted the state the 2,000 acres including the Fort Assiniboine buildings on July 4, 1913. The 1915 Act providing for the opening of land at Fort Assiniboine upheld this earlier agreement.
- ¹⁷⁶ Cato Sells to Secretary of the Interior, November 26, 1913, CCF, Blackfeet, RG75, NA.
- ¹⁷⁷ Ryan, "Freedom, Fear, and the American Periphery", p. 92.
- ¹⁷⁸ Francis Paul Prucha, *American Indian Treaties: The History of a Political Anomaly* (University of California Press, 1994), pp. 287-90, 331-33.
- ¹⁷⁹ *In the Matter of Administration of the Affairs of the Rocky Boy Indians*, July 1, 1925, Box 2, Folder 1, Frank Bird Linderman Papers, K. Ross Toole Archives, Mansfield Library, University of Montana.
- ¹⁸⁰ Commissioner Scott Report of the Rocky Boy Agency, June 1928, *Survey of Conditions of the Indians in the United States, Rocky Boy Reservation*, July 23, 1929, p. 12543.
- ¹⁸¹ Walter Liggett report, "Law and Order," in *Survey of Conditions*, Rocky Boy Reservation, July 23, 1929, p. 12526.
- ¹⁸² Malone, Roeder, and Lang, *Montana*, p.242.
- ¹⁸³ Ibid., pp. 281-82.
- ¹⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 292-96.
- ¹⁸⁵ Foster, *We Know Who We Are*, pp. 445-46.
- ¹⁸⁶ Survey of Conditions, 1933, Subcommittee of the Committee on Indian Affairs, "Agent Wooldridge Report," 1933, p. 16653.
- ¹⁸⁷ Nault, *Fred Nault: Montana Metis*, p. 10.
- ¹⁸⁸ Rosalyn R. LaPier, "Between Hay and Grass," in *Proceedings of the University of Great Falls International Conference on the Metis Peoples of Canada and the United States*, ed. William Furdell (University of Great Falls, 1996), pp. 108, 13-14.
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- ¹⁹⁰ Ibid., pp.292-96.
- ¹⁹¹ Nault, *Fred Nault: Montana Metis*, pp. 18-19.
- ¹⁹² Ibid.
- ¹⁹³ Petition of the Governor of Montana and Choteau, Hill, Blaine, Phillips, and Cascade County Commissioners, January 14, 1932, "Homeless Indians in Montana," National Archives; Copy of Senate Bill 2143, December 17, 1931, "Montana Homeless Indians," RG 75, NA.
- ¹⁹⁴ F.M. Cowan to Burton K. Wheeler, October 13, 1931, "Homeless Indians in Montana," RG 75, NA.
- ¹⁹⁵ L.H. Kommers to Wheeler, January 7, 1932, and Earl Bronson to Wheeler, January 15, 1932, both in "Homeless Indians in Montana," NA; copy of Senate Bill 2143, "Reimbursement to Blaine County," December 17, 1931, NA; copy of S4392, "Reimbursement for Cascade and Hill Counties," RG 75 NA; copy of H.R. 8397, "Care of Indigent Indians," June 30, 1933, RG 75, NA.
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- ²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 112, 15.
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- ²²³ Ryan, "Freedom, Fear, and the American Periphery", p. 50.
- ²²⁴ Frank C. Churchill to Secretary of the Interior, November 10, 1908, CCF, Blackfeet, RG75, NA.
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- ²²⁷ Larry W. Burt, "Nowhere Left to Go: Montana's Crees, Metis, and Chippewas and the Creation of Rocky Boy's Reservation," *Great Plains Quarterly* 7 (Summer 1987): p. 207.
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